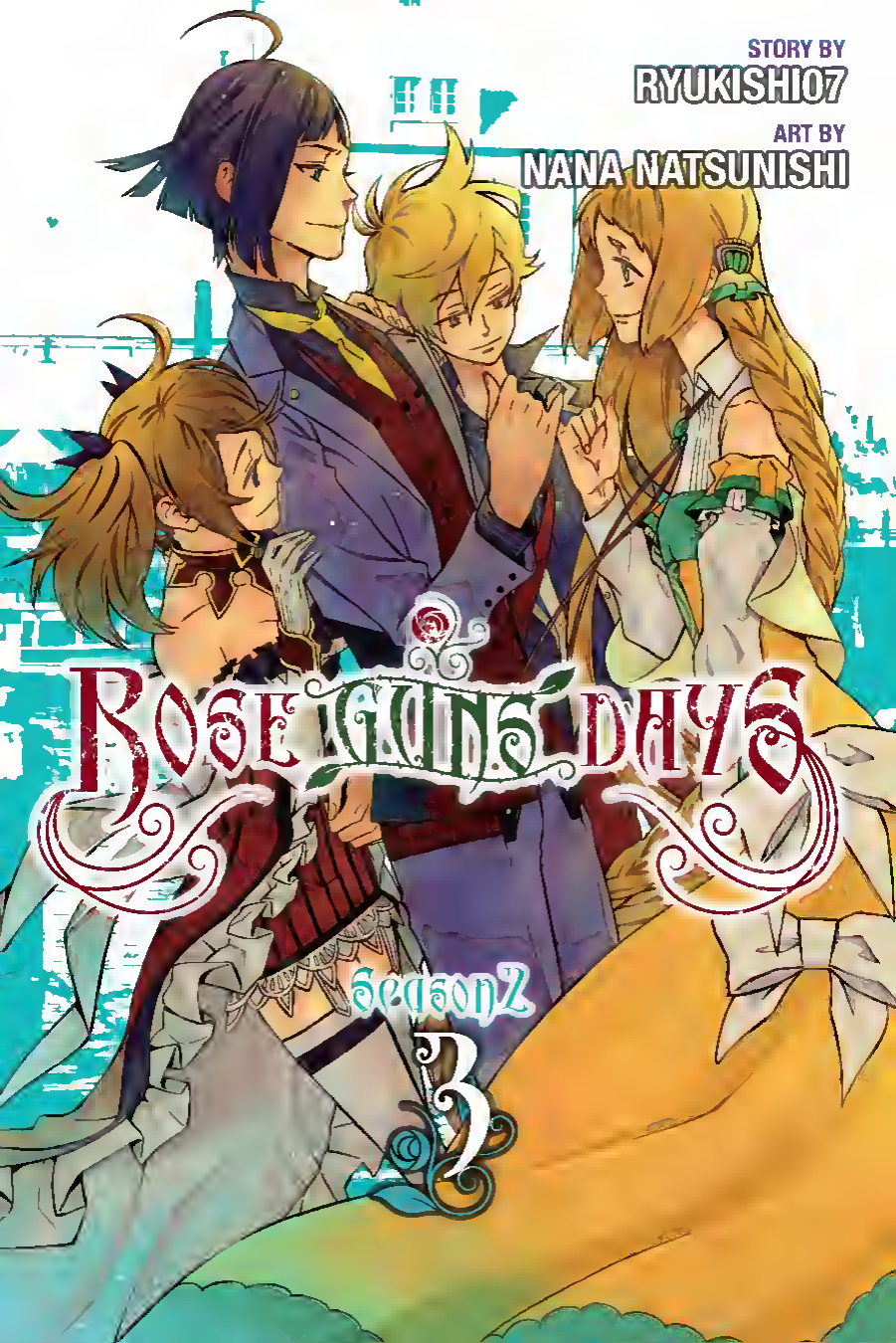
STORY BY
RYUKISHI07
ART BY
NANA NATSUNISHI
ROSE GUNS DAYS
Season2
3

Rose Guns Days
Season2
3

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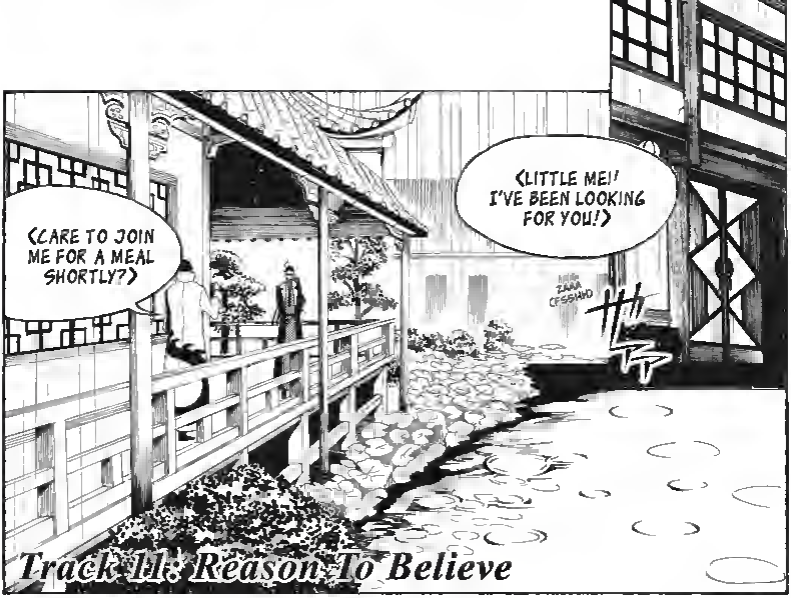


Track 11: Reason To Believe

IF I WIN, MEI-CHAN...
...LET'S MAKE A WAGER, YOU AND I.
〈PARDON ME....YOUR RIDE IS HERE.〉
...THEN YOU WILL BE MINE ONCE AGAIN.
IF YOU AND I WERE A TEAM, WE COULD STEER THE GOLDEN DRAGONS INTO THE FUTURE AS WE SEE FIT.
I SIMPLY HOPE WE CAN GET ALONG, JUST AS WE DID WHEN I SERVED AS YOUR SPONSOR...
...BACK WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG.
SUCH EXCELLENT JAPANESE ...
... SAME AS EVER.

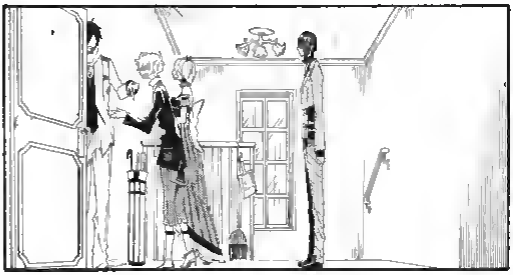
...PUTTING IT THAT WAY... IT ALMOST SOUNDS LIKE A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.
I THINK YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY DELICIOUS.
GORO (RUMBLE)
GORO
WE WOULD BE COOPERATING AIMING FOR THE SAME GOAL.
SO YES. YOU COULD SAY I'M INTERESTED IN HAVING YOU AS SOMETHING LIKE A WIFE.
...
GORO
GORO
GORO
...I WANT THE SAME THING THAT YOU DO.
...FINE. BUT IF I WIN...
EH?

PSHAN (FLASH)
GORO (SHUDDER)
ALL OF THE TIME YOU HAVE LEFT IN THIS WORLD...
...WILL BE MINE, SIR.

PSHAN (FLASH)
ALL OF IT, MINE.
EVERY MINUTE. EVERY LAST SECOND...

Immigrant
FISHAN

SATAN
ISLAND



GACHA (OPEN)
KACHI (TICK)
POOON
POOON (DONG)
FUWA (SWING)
ZEL...
DOSA (THUD)
LOOKS LIKE SHE DOESN'T HAVE THE ENERGY TO RUN.
GET HER DRIED OFF...
...AND PUT HER TO BED IN THE INNER ROOM.

...CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
PISHAN (FLASH)
THAT OUR ZEL...
IT WAS ALL A SETUP FROM THE START, WE BELIEVE.
...IS AN ASSAS-SIN...
MADAM ROSE IS FAMOUS FOR HER SYMPATHY TOWARDS LADIES OF THE NIGHT...
SHE USED THAT AGAINST US...
SHE DOVE IN FRONT OF MADAM ROSE'S CAR ON PURPOSE...

THAT'S THE SCRIPT.
THIS GIRL IS A LADY OF THE NIGHT... AND SHE'S RUN AWAY FROM YOUR ESTAB-LISHMENT.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU FELLOWS TO PUT ON A BRILLIANT ACT AS THE VILLAINS
HEY, WE JUST GOT WORD FROM THE SCOUTS.
ROSE'S CAR'S ABOUT TO PULL OUT!
HEE HEE. IT'LL BE A PIECE OF CAKE, MR. GOLDEN DRAGON.
(HOTARUBI.)
(...DON'T SCREW THIS UP.)
(...RIGHT.)
...MOST LIKELY...

...ZEL. I NEED TO HEAR IT FROM YOUR LIPS.
OTHERWISE, I'M NOT GONNA BELIEVE A WORD OF IT...
...IT'S A LIE.
...SHE USED YOU GUYS...
...IN ORDER TO GAIN OUR TRUST.
EVERY-ONE...
I'M SOR-RY...

YOU'RE LYING!!!
NO, NO, NO!!
IT'S ALL A BIG FAT LIE!!
...
GIRL CCLENCHD

THAT A LIE, TOO...?
... SO ...
...ALL THAT BUSI-NESS 'BOUT AMNESIA 'N' SUCH..
SO GRUMBLE!
... NO.
THAT WAS THE TRUTH ...
...KINDA FEEL LIKE I KNEW IT ALL ALONG, SOME'OW.

STRANGE? WHAT THE HELL'S "STRANGE"!?

...THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGE, I DID.
SHUT IT, NINA!

TA-HA-HA-HA-HA...
...

I'VE...
...BEEN THINKING THAT.
TA-HA... TA-HA-HA-HA.

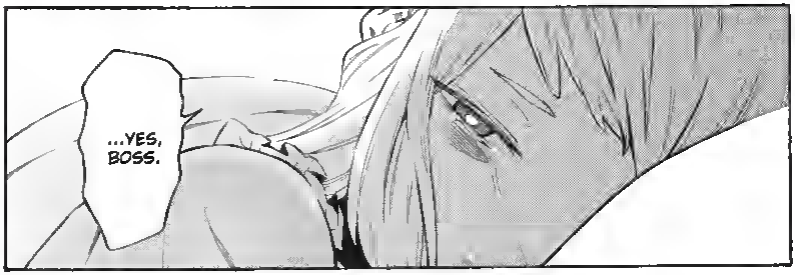
ZUUU (TAP)
THAT A BUNCH OF DUNCES LIKE US...
...COULD 'AVE ALL THIS GOOD LUCK LATELY...

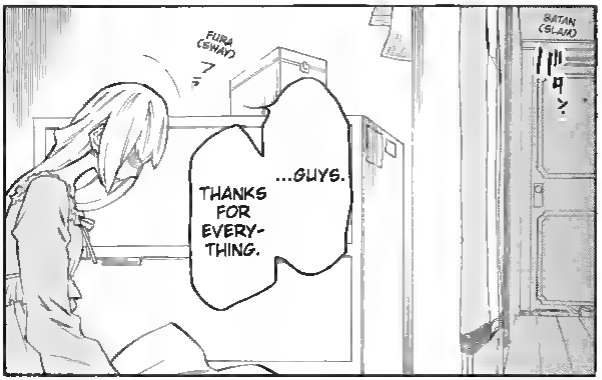
...
WHY NOT?
...BUT YOU...
...DIDN'T PUT THE POISON IN ROSE-SAN'S GLASS.
I THINK...
...SHE'S A PERSON WHO SHOULDN'T DIE...
HAH!
.....

GATA (STAND)
RICHARD-SAN SAID...
...“KILL HER.”
SU- (FWIP)
WAYNE-SAN...!
...BUT...
SA (CLEAR)

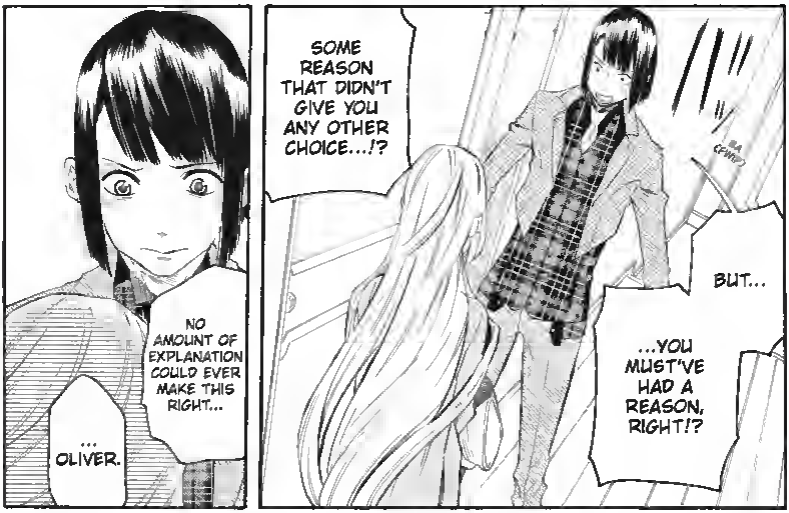
...ROSE-SAN TOLD ME...
...TO LET HER LIVE.
...!
TO ME, ROSE-SAN'S WORD IS THE WORD OF GOD.
POSU (PWUMP)
ZEL... GET OUT OF TOWN.

I'LL SHOOT YOU DEAD.
YOU'LL GET NO MERCY FROM ME NEXT TIME WE MEET.


...YES, BOSS.


FUFA (SWAY)
...GUYS.
THANKS FOR EVERY-THING.
BATAN (SLAM)
WHAT A SHAME

...
...FOR DECEIVING YOU...
I'M SO SORRY...


SOME REASON THAT DIDN'T GIVE YOU ANY OTHER CHOICE...!?
BA (PAW)
BUT...
...YOU MUST'VE HAD A REASON, RIGHT!?
NO AMOUNT OF EXPLANATION COULD EVER MAKE THIS RIGHT...
...
OLIVER.

AT THIS POINT, THERE'S NOTHING A LIAR LIKE ME...
...CAN SAY TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT...
BATAN
バタン
...
ARE YOU TWO REALLY OKAY WITH THIS!?
...SORRY, OLIVER.
GA (GRAB)
CHARLES!
...
HEY, NINA!

I REALLY LIKE ZEL...
I STILL LOVE HER...
I-I'VE GOT...
...NO CLUE WHAT TO THINK ANYMORE...
SORRY? SORRY FOR WHAT?
I DON'T WANT YOUR APOLO-GIES!
...THAT'S WHY...
SO...
PAIN (GLAP)
I FEEL LIKE A FOOL!!
I JUST DON'T GET ANYTHING ANYMORE!

...THIS DUMB OLD HEAD OF MINE...
...CAN'T TELL WHICH WAY'S UP ANYMORE!
UWAHHHH...
UHHH...
...
I NEVER THOUGHT YOU TWO COULD BE SO COLD-HEARTED!!
BATAN (SUAN)

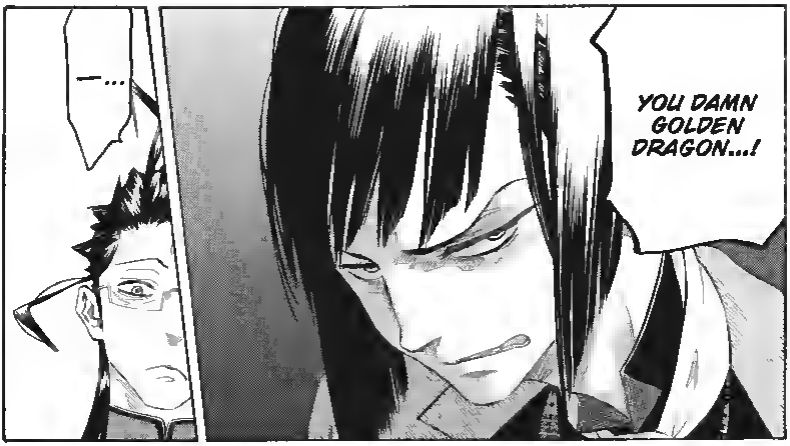
ZEL...
ZEL!?
SHIT...
ZEL...!!
PRIM
ZAAA
CFSSHH

HOW COULD ZEL...
...BE AN ASSAS-SIN...?
...I STILL JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
I'M SORRY, EVERY-ONE...
...FOR CALLING YOU OUT HERE.

...BUT IT'S TRUE. SHE IS...
...IT PAINS ME TO SAY THIS...

...HE IS ABOUT TO EXPLAIN IT TO US...
THOUGH THE REASON WHY SHE BECAME AN ASSASSIN...
GACHA (CLICK)
KOTSU (STEP)
KOTSU

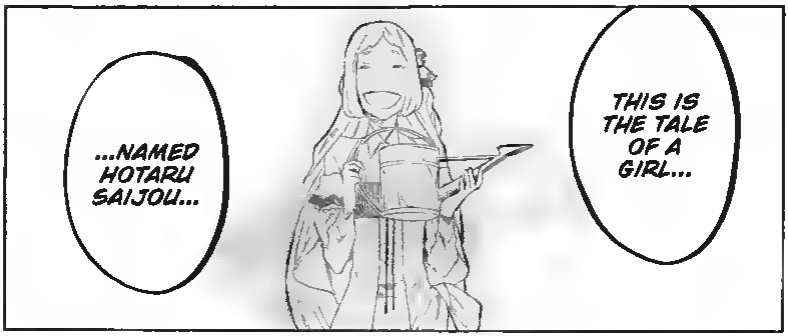
BAN (BAM)
MY, MY, MY. APOLOGIES FOR MY LATENESS, YES.
IT IS I, MEIJIU LEE, YES!
PLEASED...
...TO MEET YOU, YES.
GATA (STAND)
KOTSU
MEIJIU LEE!?
Y'MEAN... THE GOLDEN DRAGONS' "BLACK DRAGON LEE"!?
JUST BEFORE THE PASTA PARTY...
...I RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM MEIJIU-SAN...
SFX: GISHI (CREAK)
...WHY?
...ABOUT ZEL...


—...
YOU DAMN GOLDEN DRAGON...!

HAAH...
...PLEASE DON'T GLARE AT ME SO.
HOTARUBI WAS NOT ACTING ON MY ORDERS.

...I DON'T KNOW ANY "HOTARUBI"!
ZEL HAD A TRUE CASE OF AMNESIA.
AND DURING THAT TIME...
...WE WERE ACTUALLY FRIENDS ...!
...!

SHE TRULY LOST HER MEMORIES!?
...I SEE. IT ALL MAKES SENSE NOW, YES.
LAST MONTH, SHE DID NOT COME TO SEE HER FATHER ON THE APPOINTED DAY.
I THOUGHT IT STRANGE, GIVEN THAT HER FATHER IS THE ONLY THING SHE CARES FOR IN THIS WORLD...
.....
'ER.. FATH-ER?
...I WILL TELL YOU ALL THAT I KNOW.
TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY.


THIS IS THE TALE OF A GIRL...
...NAMED HOTARU SAIJOU...

HOTARU SAIJOU WAS BORN IN JAPAN-OCCUPIED CHINA...
HER FATHER WAS THERE TO PROMOTE THE GREATER EAST ASIA CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE, AND SHE GOT TO LIVE IN RELATIVE LUXURY, AS SUCH.
HOWEVER, THE WAR WAS BROUGHT TO A SWIFT END BY THE GREAT DISASTER IN JAPAN—
THE CHINESE SUDDENLY ROSE UP...
...AND BEGAN FIGHTING BACK AGAINST THE JAPANESE.
THE SAIJOU FAMILY MADE EVERY EFFORT TO FLEE TO JAPAN.
BUT THEN...
HER FATHER— THE CHIEF OF POLICE...
...WAS SUSPECTED OF COMMITTING AN ATROCITY AGAINST THE CHINESE IN HIS OWN JAIL.
HE WAS SOON ARRESTED. YES.

A-AN ATROCITY!?
ACCORDING TO MR. SAIJOU...
...THIS ALLEGED "ATROCITY" WAS IN FACT AN ACCIDENT.
IT WAS THE MIDDLE OF WINTER. A BROKEN HEATER...
...ENDED UP RELEASING CARBON MONOXIDE INTO THE CELLS...
...JUST BEFORE HIS EXECUTION, HOWEVER...
...MR. SAIJOU VANISHED FROM HIS CELL...
...ALONG WITH HIS ONLY SURVIVING FAMILY... LITTLE HOTARU-SAN.
HOW'D THEY GET AWAY...?

THAT SAID, THE DEAL DID NOT GO AS PLANNED...
GUSHA (CHUCKLE)
IT WAS APPARENTLY A HIGHER-UP IN THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT WHO SAVED HIM.
MR. SAIJOU MADE A DEAL IN EXCHANGE FOR A TICKET TO JAPAN. HE WOULD HAND OVER ALL OF HIS HIDDEN WEALTH AND RESOURCES.
AND MR. SAIJOU WAS PUT INTO CONFINEMENT.
THE TRUST BETWEEN THEM WAS BROKEN.
THE OFFICIAL SUSPECTED THAT MR. SAIJOU HADN'T DISCLOSED THE LOCATION OF ALL HIS WEALTH.
...THE OFFICIAL DECIDED THAT THE "RESOURCE" BEFORE HIS VERY EYES WAS ONE WORTH HAVING...
—IN THE END...
...WHETHER THERE WAS ACTUALLY MORE MONEY HIDDEN AWAY OR NOT...

WHAT'D SHE HAVE TO DO...?
—SO...
PERHAPS IF HOTARU-SAN HAD NOT BEEN SUCH A BEAUTY...
...SHE WOULD NOT HAVE LIVED TO ESCAPE CHINA, YES.
IN EXCHANGE FOR HER FATHER'S ASSURED SAFETY...
...SHE WAS FORCED TO ENDURE ALL MANNER OF APPALLING TREATMENT...
ALL UNTIL ONE OF THOSE BOSSES ...
...DECIDED TO MAKE HER AN ASSASSIN.
SHE WAS SOLD BACK AND FORTH, FROM ONE DESPICABLE "MASTER" TO THE NEXT...

...ZEL'S FATHER
WHERE IS HE NOW?
.....
ALL FOR HER FATHER'S SAKE...
...SHE WOULD COMMIT ANY DEPRAVITY DEMANDED OF HER...
HOW WOULD YOUR KNOWING CHANGE ANYTHING?
SOMEWHERE IN THE GOLDEN DRAGONS' HIDEOUT.
WHY ...

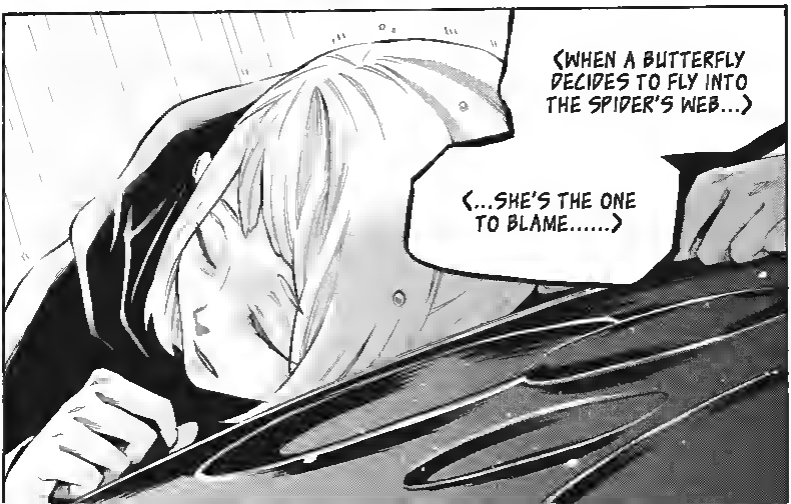
WHY COULDN'T WE STOP ZEL...?
WE WERE JUST WORRYING 'BOUT OUR OWN DAMN SELVES...
NEVER STOPPED T'THINK 'BOUT ZEL'S FEELINGS FER A SECOND...
WE THOUGHT WE WERE 'ER ALLIES...
...COME WHAT MAY...
I THINK ZEL IS SEARCHING FOR HER FATHER...
...TO TAKE HIM BACK FROM THE GOLDEN DRAGONS...

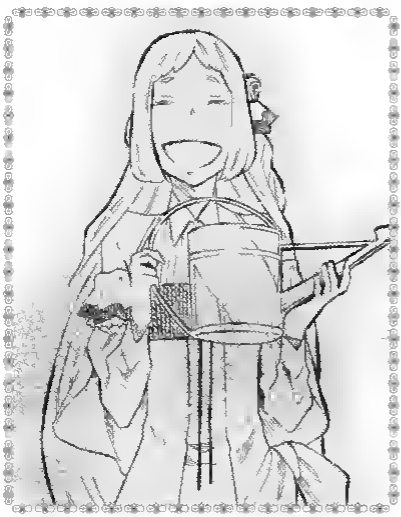
WE OWE ZEL SO MUCH, AND NOW'S THE TIME TO REPAY THAT DEBT!
IF YOU KNOW ANYTHING ELSE THAT COULD HELP...
...YOU GOTTA TELL US!

HAA...
HAA...

HAVE TO FIND FATHER...
IF I DON'T, HE'S...
...GONNA BE KILLED...!
(PARDON ME...)
DON (THUD)
!
TOSH (THD)

〈...DON'T HOLD IT AGAINST US...〉
UGH.
〈...HOTARUBI.〉


〈WHEN A BUTTERFLY DECIDES TO FLY INTO THE SPIDER'S WEB...〉
〈...SHE'S THE ONE TO BLAME.....〉

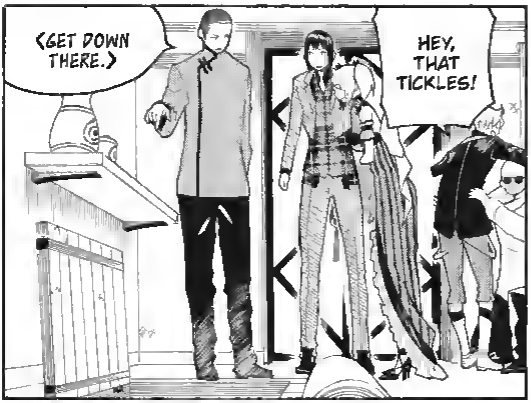


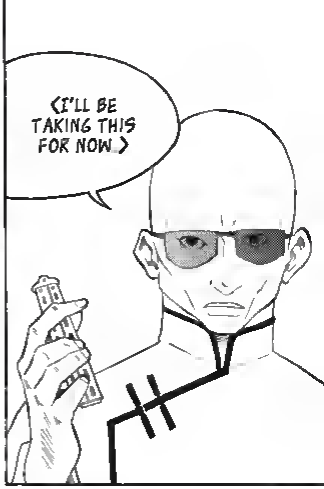
Track 12:
If You Love Someone, Set Them Free

DIAMOND DOG
〈SAY "AHHHHH"〉
♪
〈THAT SLIT IN YOUR DRESS.. SO VERY CHIC.〉
〈NA-HA-HA-HA!〉
〈I PROPOSE A TOAST.〉
〈AND THE LONG RAIN APPEARS TO BE OVER.〉
〈..LITTLE MEI!?〉
〈SIR.〉
KOTSU (STEP)
〈EH! GOOD TO SEE YOU.〉
〈SO GLAD YOU DECIDED TO TAKE ME UP ON MY INVITATION!!〉
〈WELL, I FINISHED MY ERRAND, SO...〉

〈OH, DID YOU HEAR, LITTLE MEI?〉
TOPCIPIO (GLUG-GLUG)
SU (FSSHH)
〈TO WILT IN ONE WEEK'S TIME.〉
〈SUCH IS THE FATE OF A BEAUTIFUL ROSE...〉
〈THE PASTA PARTY WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH, IT SEEMS.〉
〈THAT'S OUR HOTARUBI FOR YOU.〉
〈...INDEED.〉
CHIN (CLINK)
〈...CHEERS!〉

〈"TAKE THEM TO YOU-KNOW-WHERE... —MEIJIU LEE"〉
〈I HEARD THAT A TRIO WAS GONNA SHOW UP, BUT.〉
IT'S FROM MEIJIU-SAN.
WE GOT THIS LETTER, SEE.
〈...NEVER THOUGHT THEY'D BE KIDS...〉
GU (GRIP)
〈A KNIFE?〉
TCH!
PON (PAT)
PON
〈...!〉


〈GET DOWN THERE.〉
HEY, THAT TICKLES!


〈I'LL BE TAKING THIS FOR NOW.〉

...BUT I WILL IF WE SURVIVE THIS...

HE SAID "GET DOWN THERE," RIGHT?
DON'T LOOKIT ME. I NEVER STUDIED CHINESE...

BLACK AS PITCH DOWN 'ERE...
HEY, TURN ON A LIGHT OR TWO!

KAN!
KAN (KLUNK)
TCH.
SO THIS IS HOW THE CHINESE WELCOME YOU...

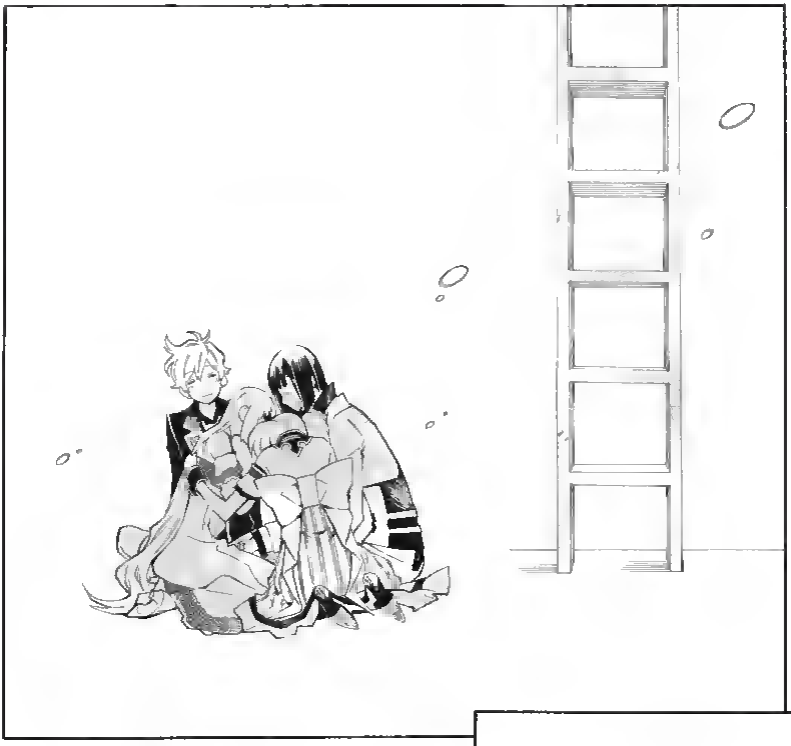
カシャ
ACHA (SLAM)
!!?
GIII (CREAK)
キ!!
...HUH?
WE'RE LOCKED IN...!!
...GOTTA SAY, DON'T THINK IT'S A GUEST ROOM.
THIS PLACE.
SHIT...
GAN (WHAM)
カ!!
EVERYONE'S ALWAYS MESSING WITH US!!
DON'T SMASH THE LADDER— IT'S OUR ONLY WAY OUT!
OLIVER?

. . . THAT VOICE.
WHO'S THAT ...?
TOO DARK T'SEE ANYTHIN'...
!
THAT VOICE. IT'S...
PUSH! LOAD

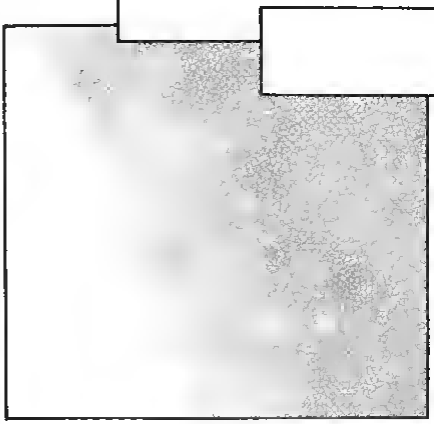
ZEL...!
ZEL...!

ABOUT YOUR DAD TOO...!
MEIJIU LEE TOLD US ABOUT THIS PLACE.
WHY'RE YOU HERE ...?
YOU GUYS...
SO, SO SORRY...
...THAT WE DIDN T BELIEVE YEH...
SO WE DON'T 'OLD IT AGAINST YEH, ZEL...!
WE OF ALL PEOPLE KNOW 'OW IMPORTANT PARENTS CAN BE...
WE'RE SORRY, ZEL...

...REALLY?
CAN I...
...!
...CAN I REALLY STILL BE WITH YOU GUYS...?
'COURSE YOU CAN.
...WE'RE ALL GONNA...
...SAVE YOUR POPS, ZEL!



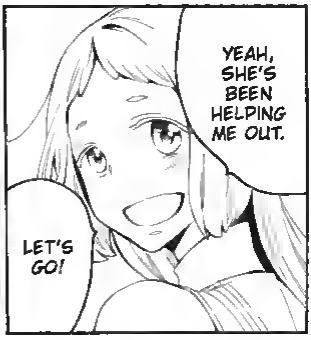
I WANTED TO RESCUE FATHER BY MYSELF, BUT...
YEAH...
Y'GOT CAUGHT BY THEM GOLDEN DRAGONS!?



GATA GATA
NO TRUSTING HIM, THAT'S FOR SURE.
HE'S A WILY ONE.
DID MEIJIU LEE SET US ALL UP...?
...THEY PICKED ME UP IN CHINA-TOWN...
GATA
!?
GATA
〈MR. MEIJIU HAS RETURNED.〉
〈YOU CAN COME UP NOW.〉
XIAO-LAN.
FRIEND OF YOURS?
GAKAN GOPEN!

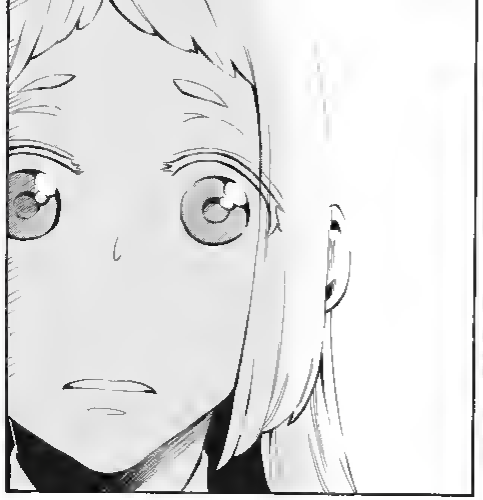
COME NOW. TODAY HAS BEEN A ROUGH DAY FOR ALL, YES.

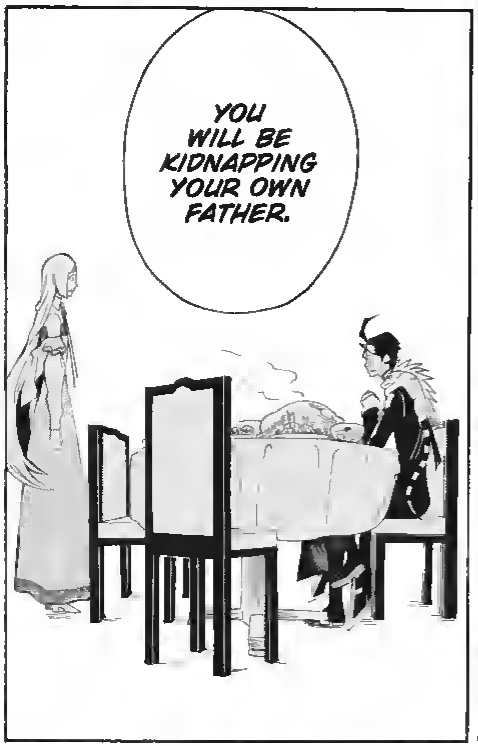
IF SHE'S HERE... WE'RE GONNA BE FINE.


YEAH, SHE'S BEEN HELPING ME OUT.
LET'S GO!

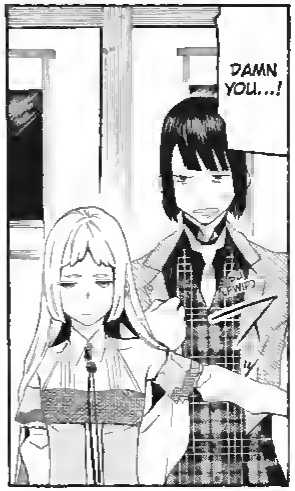
SO BON APPETIT, YES!
PAKAN CTAPAHO
GASA GASA
WHO'D EAT THIS OBVIOUSLY-POISONED SPREAD...?
Meat bumms!!

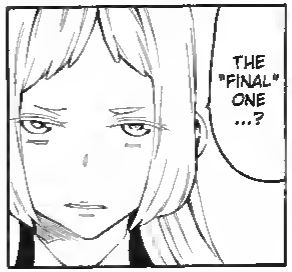
I APOLOGIZE FOR LOCKING YOU UP IN SUCH A PLACE, YES.
...WHAT'S THE MEANING OF ALL THIS?
GORI (GRIND)
WE'RE NOT ABOUT TO EAT THIS FOOD WITHOUT AN EXPLANATION.
BUT IF I'D LET YOU RUN FREELY...
.. YOU'D HAVE ATTEMPTED YOUR FATHER'S RESCUE ON YOUR OWN, WOULDN'T YOU?
IT WAS NOT MY DESIRE TO HAVE YOU DIE A DOG'S DEATH.
!
...SO BASICALLY YOU WANT ME TO DO ANOTHER JOB?
IS THAT IT?




YOU WILL BE KIDNAPPING YOUR OWN FATHER.

MASAYOSHI SAIJOU.
...A JAPANESE MAN LOCKED AWAY BY THE GOLDEN DRAGONS.


DAMN YOU...!


THE "FINAL" ONE ...?

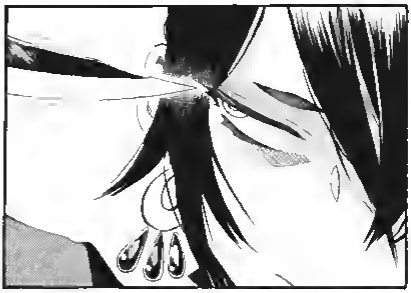
GOOD GUESS... HOTARUBI.
CONSIDER THIS YOUR FINAL MISSION.

I'M GOING TO HAVE YOU "KIDNAP" A CERTAIN SOMEONE.
YOUR TARGET IS...

I AM ASHAMED TO SAY IT, BUT TWO FACTIONS EXIST WITHIN THE GOLDEN DRAGONS.
AS THE HEAD OF THE FACTION WHICH FAVORS LINEAGE...
...I AIM TO REDUCE THE ELDER COUNCIL'S INFLUENCE AND POWER.
...BUT WHY?
THAT WOULD BE A LOSS FOR THE GOLDEN DRAGONS...
PRECISELY MY INTENT, YES.
SO AFTER FAILING TO ASSASSINATE MADAM ROSE...
...IF I ALSO SUCCEED IN STEALING MY FATHER BACK...
...THEN THE CURRENT BOSSES WILL LOSE FACE...?
THE ELDERS SPENT QUITE A LOT OF MONEY TO PURCHASE YOU, HOTARUBI.
THEY WILL HAVE EGG ON THEIR FACES INDEED IF YOU FLEE AFTER FAILING TO EARN THEM RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENT, YES.
THAT SAID, IF WORD GETS OUT THAT THE ASSASSINATION FAILED...
...THEY MAY SNIFF OUT MY INVOLVEMENT, WHICH WOULD MEAN TROUBLE, YES.
AS SUCH, I WOULD LIKE TO KEEP YOU HERE UNDER MY PROTECTION FOR NOW, YES.

...AND SEE YOU BREATHE YOUR LAST BREATH.
KOTSU
YOU'RE BASICALLY SAYING THIS IS AN OFFER THAT ZEL CAN'T REFUSE!
EVEN IF ZEL SOMEHOW GETS TAKEN FROM US
WE'RE STILL GONNA HUNT YOU DOWN...
KOTSU
KOTSU (STEP)
IF YOU'RE SECRETLY PLANNING TO USE ZEL AND THEN BETRAY HER, I'M NOT GONNA LET THAT HAPPEN...
...MEIJIU LEE.
HYU (WHISH)

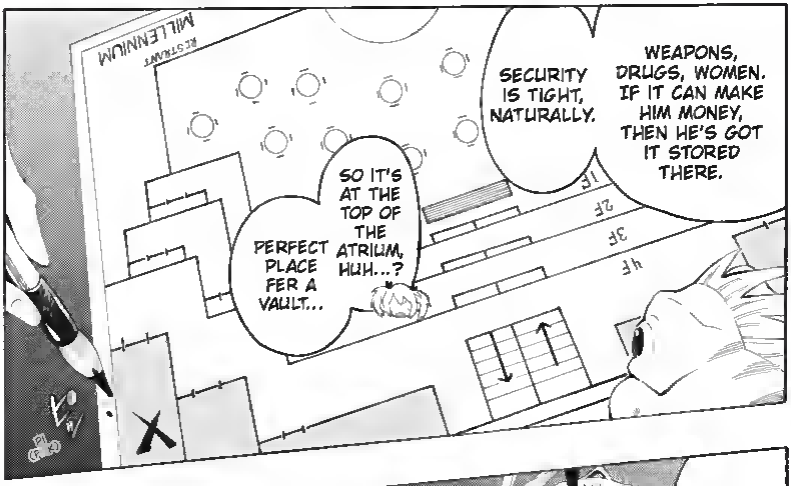
PA
(FLIP)
JYAKI
(KASHINK)

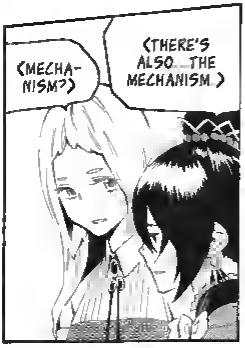


〈IT'S MY POLICY NEVER TO DECEIVE A LADY, YES!〉
NIKO (GIGGLE)
〈...YOU CAN.〉
SO MUCH FOR PATTING YOU DOWN.
OHH...
〈...XIAO-LAN.〉
〈CAN I REALLY TRUST THIS MAN?〉
〈NOT TRUE. YOU LIED ABOUT THOSE MOON CAKES.〉
NIKO (WHAT)
.....
〈...I'LL BE CAREFUL NOT TO RUN OUT AGAIN, YES.〉
KUSH (GIGGLE)
...WE HAVE A DEAL, THEN.

KYU (SQUEEZE)
I... WANT TO SAVE MY FATHER.
AT THE VERY LEAST, I CAN SAY THAT THOSE FEELINGS ARE PURE.
WE'LL STAKE OUR LIVES TOO, IF IT'S TO HELP ZEL.
GU (LEAN)
...NO PROBLEM, THEN.
PACHIN (CLAP)
KOTO (THUD)
...THANK YOU, EVERYONE.

ON THE SURFACE, IT'S A RESTAURANT RUN BY OUR MEMBERS.
BUT IT'S JUST A FRONT. REALLY IT'S A REPOSITORY FOR WANG'S VALU-ABLES.
THIS IS WHERE YOUR FATHER IS BEING HELD CAPTIVE...


MILLENNIUM
RESTAURANT
SECURITY IS TIGHT, NATURALLY.
WEAPONS, DRUGS, WOMEN. IF IT CAN MAKE HIM MONEY, THEN HE'S GOT IT STORED THERE.
SO IT'S AT THE TOP OF THE ATRIUM, HUH...?
PERFECT PLACE FER A VAULT...
1F
2F
3F
4F


(MECHA-NISM?)
(THERE'S ALSO... THE MECHANISM.)

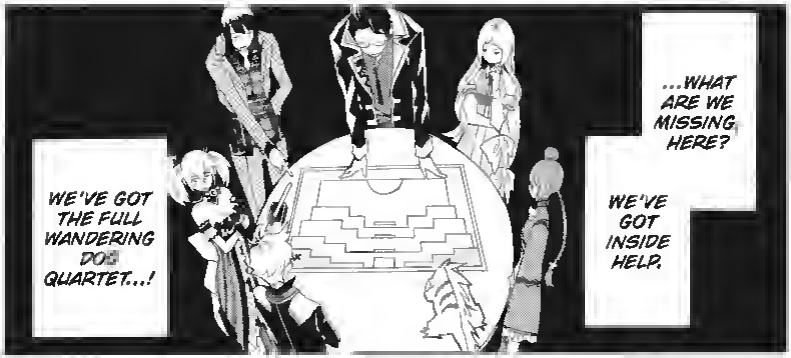
NATURALLY, THE KEY IS OF A UNIQUE DESIGN.
WANG KEEPS THAT MASTER KEY ON HIS PERSON...
...BECAUSE IT'S CAPABLE OF OPENING ANY DOOR IN THE RESTAURANT, YES.

SO WE GOTTA STEAL THAT KEY FROM WANG FIRST.
1F
2F
3F
THEN SLIP PAST THE GUARDS WHILE THE CLOCKS'RE CHIMIN'.
WHEEZE!
WHEEZE!
4F
AND RUN UP TO THE TOP FLOOR TO UNLOCK THE DOOR'N TIME...?

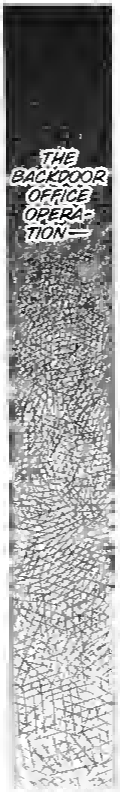
THE DOORS TO WANG'S VAULT...
...CAN ONLY BE OPENED UPON THE CHIMING OF THE CLOCKS.
EVEN THE LIQUOR CASE HE SHOWS OFF TO GUESTS...
...WILL ONLY UNLOCK WHILE THE CLOCKS CHIME.

THAT'S A REALLY ANNOYING SETUP!

WE CAN EXPECT THAT THE GUARDS WON'T BE AMATEURS.
SO THIS WON'T EXACTLY BE EASY.
WANG HIMSELF IS A CLEVER MAN WHO HAS TURNED THE TABLES ON MANY A WOULD-BE PICKPOCKET, YES.
SOUNDS ROUGH.
HMMM. LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS.
WE'VE GOT THREE HURDLES TO GET PAST!
FIRST.
HOW DO WE STEAL THE KEY FROM WANG?
SEC-OND.
WE GOTTA UNLOCK THAT DOOR BEFORE THE CLOCKS STOP CHIMING.
THIRD.
HOW D'WE SNEAK INTO THIS RESTAURANT'N THE FIRST PLACE?
IT'S THE ENEMY'S LAIR...
WE'RE DEAD IF WE GET FOUND OUT...


WE'VE GOT THE FULL WANDERING DOG QUARTET...!
...WHAT ARE WE MISSING HERE?
WE'VE GOT INSIDE HELP.

...!


THE BACKDOOR OFFICE OPERATION—

BUT IT JUST DOESN'T FEEL LIKE THIS WILL GO AS WELL...
...AS OUR OPERATION WITH THE BACKDOOR OFFICE...

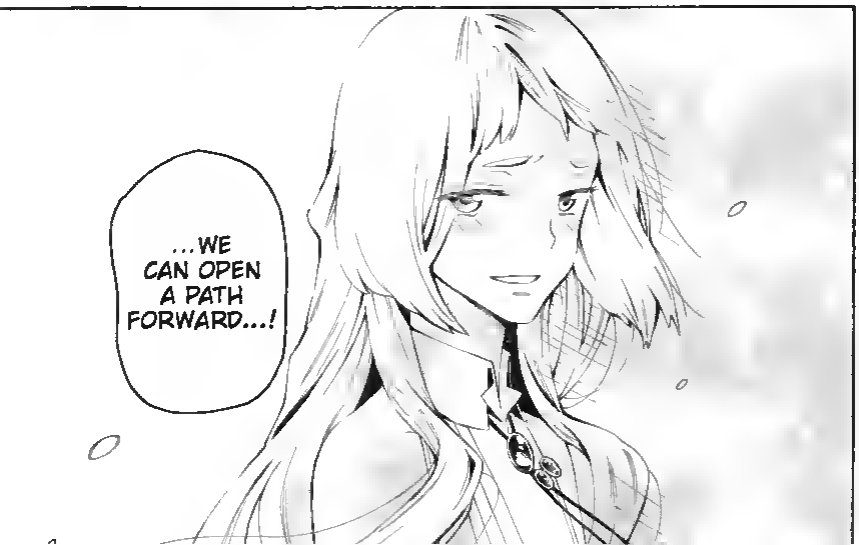
...!
...WE CAN DO IT.

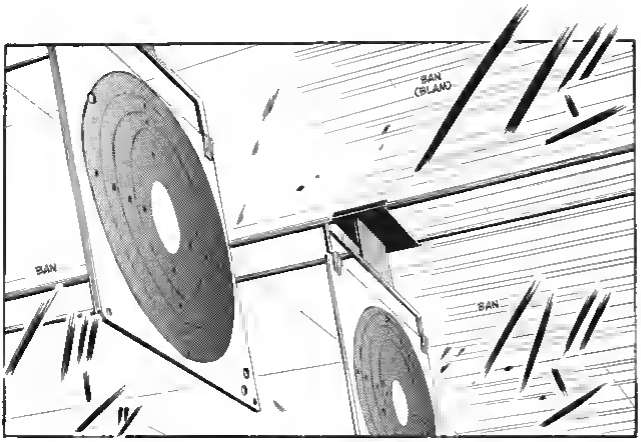
...WE'RE AS GOOD AS DEAD...
IF WE MAKE EVEN ONE MISTAKE...

OHH?

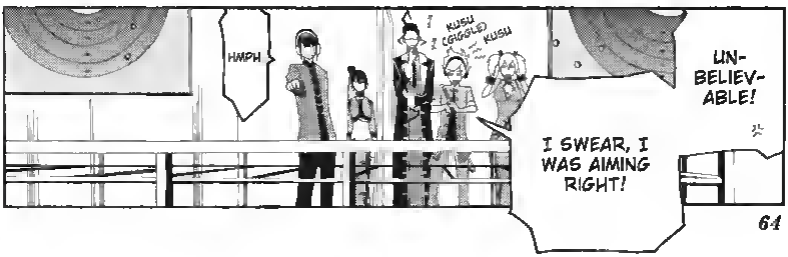
I KNOW ...

...AND OLIVER ON OUR SIDE, I KNOW...
...WITH NINA, CHARLES...
.. BUT ...


...WE CAN OPEN A PATH FORWARD...!

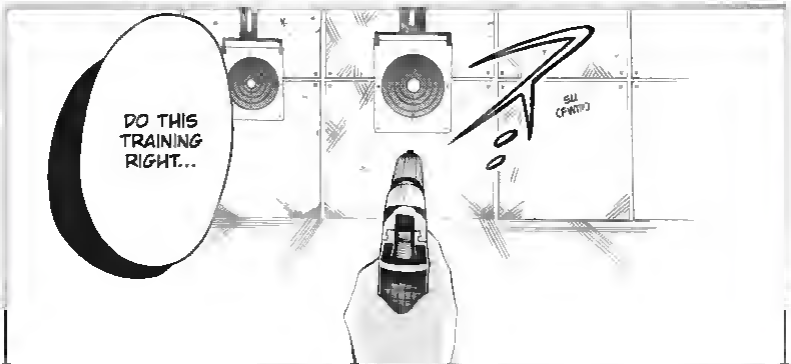

BAN
(BLAM)
BAN
BAN

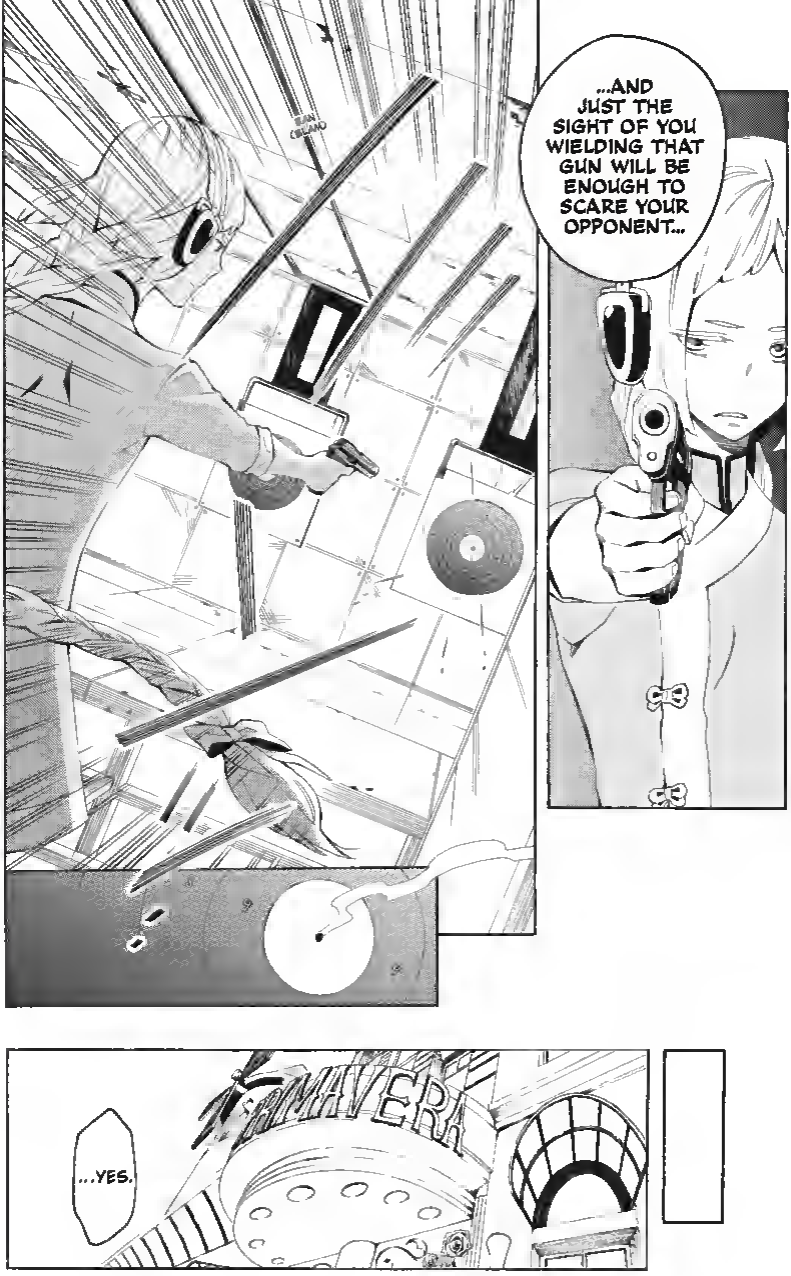
BAN


HMPH
KUSU
(GIGGLE)
KUSU
KUSU
UN-
BELIEV-
ABLE!
I SWEAR, I
WAS AIMING
RIGHT!

YOU'RE SHOWBOATING TOO MUCH WHEN YOU SHOOT, OLIVER!
DO THAT AGAIN, AND I'LL REALLY BE MAD.
UGH...
SUFO (POP)
GEEZ!
YOU GOTTA BE COOL WHEN YOU PULL THAT TRIGGER.
THAT'S WHAT BIG BRO WAYNE ALWAYS SAYS...

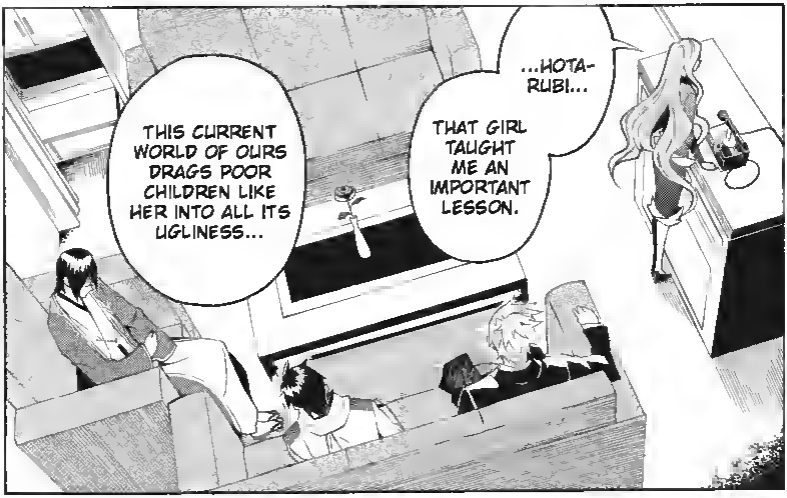
WE'RE TRAINING TO GET YOU GUYS USED TO HANDLING GUNS. NOT TO FIGHT, NECESSARILY!
MAKE NO MISTAKE, HERE!


DO THIS TRAINING RIGHT...
SU (FWIP)

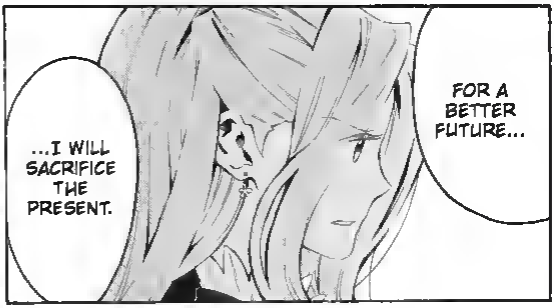

...AND JUST THE SIGHT OF YOU WIELDING THAT GUN WILL BE ENOUGH TO SCARE YOUR OPPONENT...
BAM
CHAMAVERA
...YES.

'BOUT THE ANSWER YOU'RE GIVING WANG?
.. MADE UP YOUR MIND, THEN?
(CHIN CONG)

WE HAVE A WEEK, I KNOW...
...YES, MR. WANG.

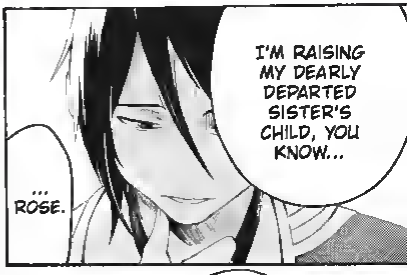

THIS CURRENT WORLD OF OURS DRAGS POOR CHILDREN LIKE HER INTO ALL ITS UGLINESS...
THAT GIRL TAUGHT ME AN IMPORTANT LESSON.
...HOTA-RUBI...

THAT'S RIGHT...
A FUTURE FOR THE CHIL-DREN


...I WILL SACRIFICE THE PRESENT.
FOR A BETTER FUTURE...

...IT'S BECAUSE YOU ARE HOW YOU ARE...
...THAT I'VE FOLLOWED YOU THROUGH THICK AND THIN.

I'M SORRY... RICHARD-KUN.


I'M RAISING MY DEARLY DEPARTED SISTER'S CHILD, YOU KNOW...
... ROSE.

THANK YOU, RICHARD-KUN.
... THEN...

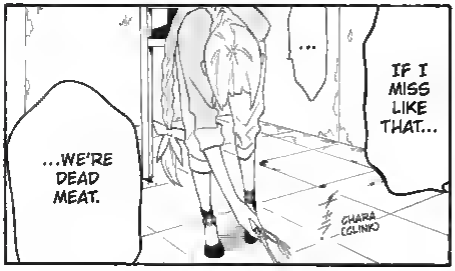
...PRIMAVERA WILL COMPLY WITH THE GOLDEN DRAGONS' DEMANDS.
WE WILL HAND OVER THE EXCLUSIVITY RIGHTS...
...AND DISSOLVE OUR WORKERS' UNION.

Track 13: Hearts on Fire

HMPH... SO THIS IS A REPLICA OF THE KEY TO YUANHONG WANG'S VAULT?
KINDA HEAVY...
KURU (SPIN)
AIM FOR THIS POT AND TRY TOSSING IT IN!
ALL WITH YOUR BACK TURNED.
KURU
SORTA FAR AWAY, ISN'T IT?
THAT'S THE DISTANCE, ACCORDING TO THESE BLUEPRINTS.
AND THE RESTAURANT'LL BE DIMLY LIT, ON TOP OF IT ALL...

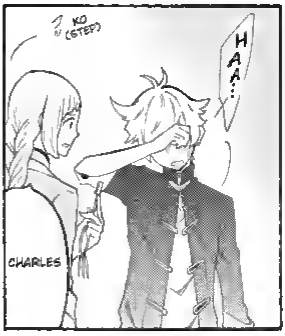
KILL THE LIGHTS.
.....OKAY.
HAA!
FU (FINISH)
PACHIN (SNAP)
SUUU (BREATHE)
.....
GU (GRIP)

PA (FLASH)
!
KASHAN (CLATTER)
KAN (CLINK)


...
IF I MISS LIKE THAT...
...WE'RE DEAD MEAT.
CHARA (CLINK)

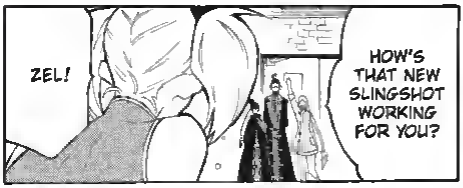
..... AH.

EVEN IF YOU DO MESS UP...
...WE'RE NOT GONNA HOLD IT AGAINST YOU.


KO (STEP)
HAA...
CHARLES

...THANKS, ZEL.
GYU (GRIP)
...WE WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE, ANYWAY...
CHAIRI (JANGLE)
WITHOUT THOSE MAGIC FINGERS OF YOURS...
...TO GIVE US A FIGHTING CHANCE!
I'LL DO WHATEVER I CAN...
〈...YOU'LL UNDERSTAND BEFORE LONG.〉
〈HE ISN'T PRACTICING TO PICKPOCKET THE KEY...〉
〈...BUT MERELY TO TOSS IT?〉
〈...MR MEIJIU I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT MANNER OF TRAINING THIS IS.....〉

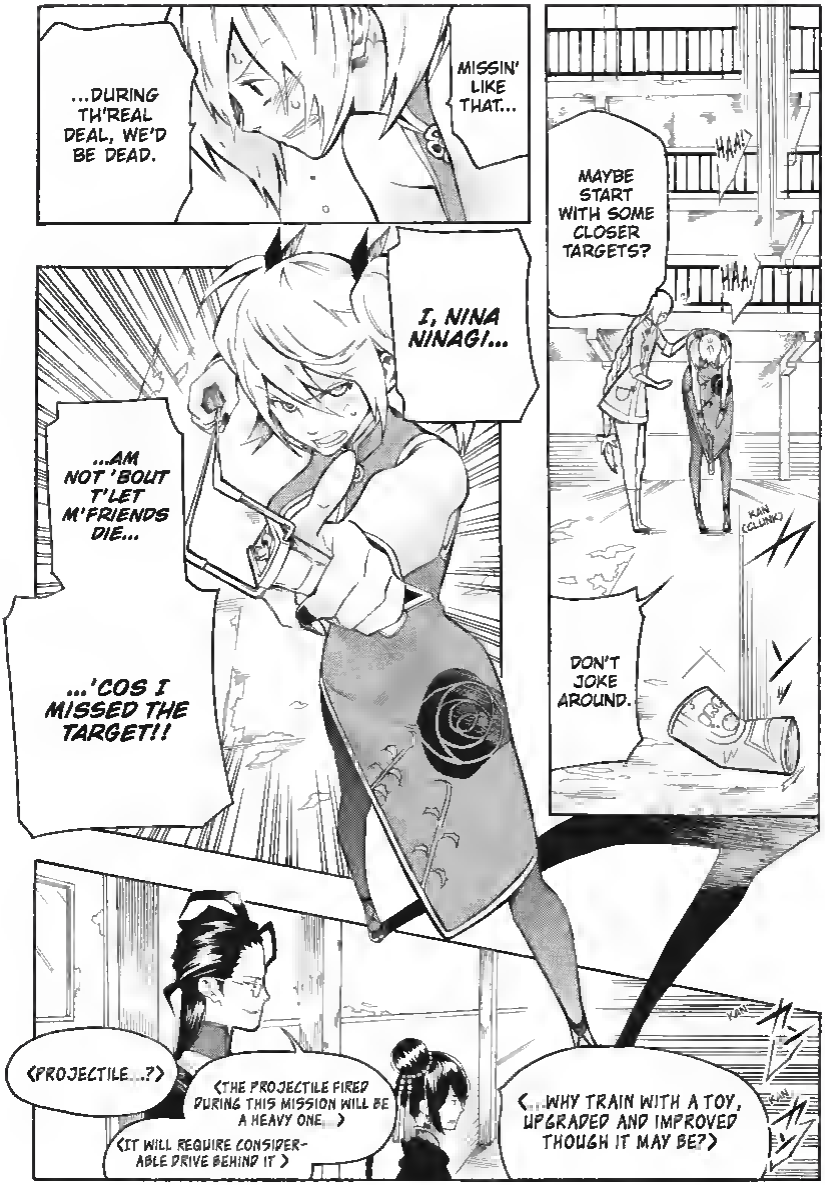
〈THIS OPERATION WILL BE QUITE THE FANTASTICAL ONE...HEH-HEH-HEH!〉
?
SFL (CREAK)


ZEL!
HOW'S THAT NEW SLINGSHOT WORKING FOR YOU?

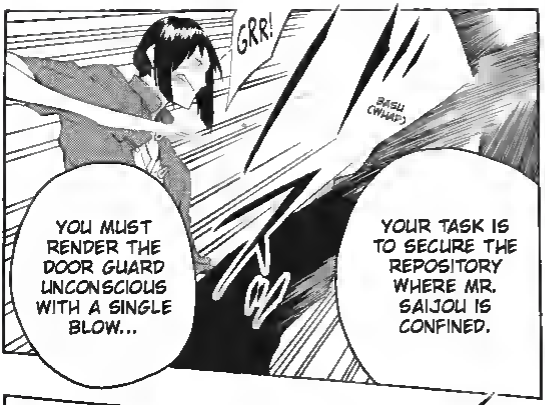
SO ALL THIS PRACTICE IS WORTH IT!
HARD T'TAME AS A WILD 'ORSE.
GUN (TUG)

HAA...
HAA...
HAA!
NINA!!

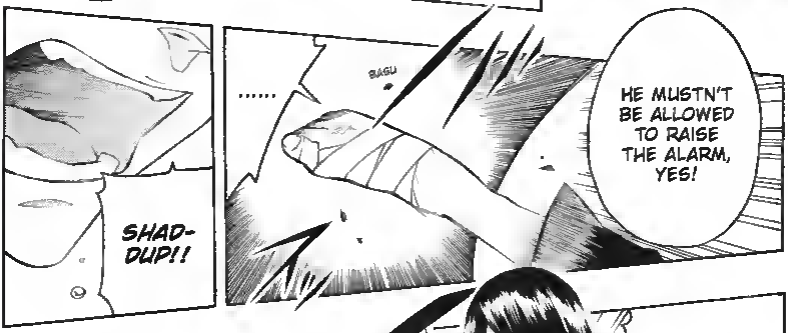
SEE?
BIN (FLIK)
SUKA (WHIFF)
SUKA
DAMMIIIT.
BIN
ORANG
KAN (WHAM)
TAKE THAT!!


...DURING TH'REAL DEAL, WE'D BE DEAD.
MISSIN' LIKE THAT...
I, NINA NINAGI...
...AM NOT 'BOUT T'LET M'FRIENDS DIE...
...'COS I MISSED THE TARGET!!
MAYBE START WITH SOME CLOSER TARGETS?
HAA!
HAA.
KAN (CLUNK)
DON'T JOKE AROUND.
(PROJECTILE...?)
(THE PROJECTILE FIRED DURING THIS MISSION WILL BE A HEAVY ONE...)
(IT WILL REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE DRIVE BEHIND IT)
(...WHY TRAIN WITH A TOY, UPGRADED AND IMPROVED THOUGH IT MAY BE?)

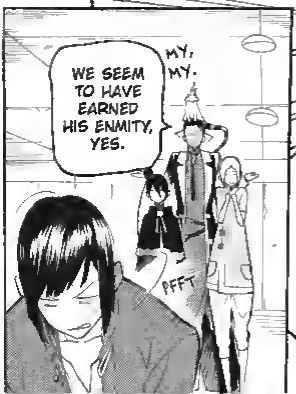
THE PROBLEM IS...
CHARLES AND NINA WILL BE FINE.
WHEEZE!
THEY'RE IMPROVING, LITTLE BY LITTLE!
HAH!
〈AND EVEN A CHILD'S TOY MAY BECOME A TERRIFYING WEAPON WHEN IN THE PROPER HANDS...〉
?
?
BASU
BASU (WHAM!)
YOUR STRENGTH IS ALL OVER THE PLACE.
THE GOAL IS TEMPERED RESTRAINT, YES.
BASU
SO TRY TO HONE YOUR SKILLS, YES.
...!
BASU


GRR!
BASU (WHAP)
YOU MUST RENDER THE DOOR GUARD UNCONSCIOUS WITH A SINGLE BLOW...
YOUR TASK IS TO SECURE THE REPOSITORY WHERE MR. SAIJOU IS CONFINED.

(HE'S TERRIBLE.)


SHAD-DUP!!
.....
BAGU
HE MUSTN'T BE ALLOWED TO RAISE THE ALARM, YES!

KUWA (GOKO)
MY KICKS ARE MY THING!
I'LL LEAVE THE PARLOR TRICKS TO YOU GUYS!


MY, MY.
WE SEEM TO HAVE EARNED HIS ENMITY, YES.
PFFT

HUH!?
LET'S DO SOME SPARRING.
...OLIVER.
!
WELL?
WELL, WHAT ...?
IT'S NOT LIKE I WANT TO KICK YOU, ZEL.
HMPH! AS IF YOU COULD.
LISTEN. UNTIL YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT THIS, I'M GONNA BEAT YOU BLOODY.
KNOCK IT OFF.
YOU'LL GET...

FU (PHISH)
...
HUR—
FU (SHOOSH)
...!
TO (SHUDDER)
THIS COUNTER-ATTACK...
SHE GOT ME ALREADY...

I NEVER UNDER-STOOD.
NOT REALLY.
GUN GYANKO
...NO.
IT'S BEEN WAY, WAY...
...HEAVIER THAN MY OWN—...
THE LIFE ZEL'S BEEN LIVING...
THE BURDEN SHE'S BEEN SHOULDER-ING...

〈...BEAUTIFULLY DONE.〉
...!
HAA...
HAA...
...MY ARMS. THEY'RE THIN, RIGHT?
...I...
...CAN'T TAKE DOWN THE GUARD QUICKLY ENOUGH...
HAA...
...EVEN SO...
...I COULDN'T TAKE YOU DOWN INSTANTA-NEOUSLY, OLIVER.
I'M NOT AS PHYSICALLY STRONG AS MOST MEN, RIGHT...?
THAT'S WHY I AIM FOR THE VITALS.

I'M RELYING ON YOU TO HELP RESCUE MY FATHER.
...!
AND YET, YOU DON'T WANT TO LEARN WHAT IT TAKES...
I...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...
TA (THUD)
DAMMIT ...

...TEACH ME

WHAT WAS THAT?

TEACH ME. SHOW ME WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY DAMN KICKS!
KOTSU (CRUNCH)

DAMMIT!
I'M SUCH A FOOL...!
ZEL'S ALREADY BROKEN UP OVER HER FATHER AS IT IS.
AND I HAD TO GO AND MAKE HER CRY ABOUT IT...!

"PLEASE TEACH ME, MEIJU-SAMA."
NIKO (GRIND)
TRY SAYING IT THAT WAY.
...!
PLEASE TEACH ME.
MEIJU-SAN!!
GAKA (GRIND)
YOU'RE MY ONLY OPTION AT THIS POINT...
I DON'T HAVE CLEVER TRICKS LIKE CHARLES AND NINA!
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY I CAN BE USEFUL TO ZEL.
I'M JUST NOT GETTING IT!!

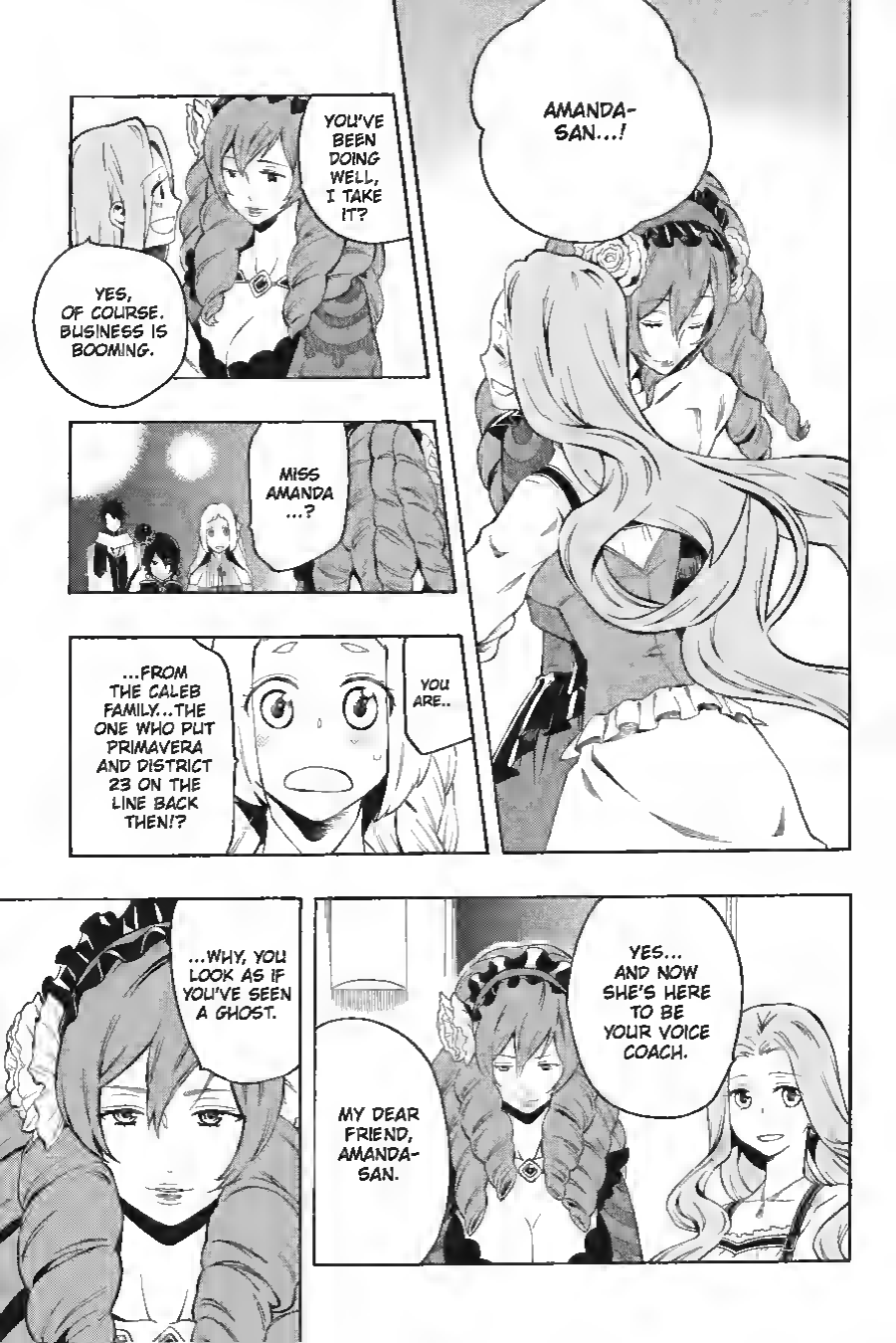
...SAY NO MORE.
SO TEAR ME DOWN AND REBUILD ME...
... MEIJIU-SAN!
!?
BO (BOOM)

PARA (FLOAT)
...
BLUR (WOOSH)
I WILL GLADLY TEAR YOU DOWN...
...AS FAR AS THE VERY MARROW IN YOUR BONES...!
KOGO (SNIGGER)
HISO (WHISPER)
Well said, Oliver! Good move
HISO
(Crocodile tears, huh?)
(That's our Hotorubi...)

〈WHAT WILL YOU DO...?〉
〈I'VE GOT MY OWN HURDLES TO DEAL WITH!!〉
〈NOW WE JUST LEAVE THE REST TO MEIJIU-SAN.〉
〈...PRACTICE MY SINGING.〉
PRIMAVERA
!
GACHA (CLICK)

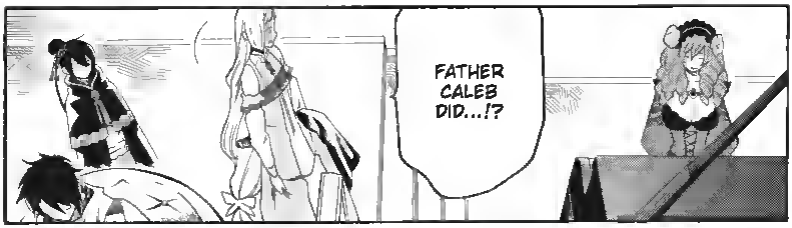
ZEL...
THE OTHER DAY...
...I'M SO VERY SORRY.
MADAM ROSE.
DON'T MENTION IT...
ANYWAY, I'M HAPPY FOR YOU.
YOU'VE FIGURED OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO DO.
YES...
TCH...
...I AIN'T YOUR BOSS.
NOW SHOO.
YOU TOO, BOSS...I'M SORRY FOR CAUSING SO MUCH TROUBLE.

...!
...PARDON ME.
GACHA (CLICK)
IT'S BEEN A WHILE...
...MADAM ROSE.
A—...


AMANDA-SAN...!
YOU'VE BEEN DOING WELL, I TAKE IT?
YES, OF COURSE. BUSINESS IS BOOMING.
MISS AMANDA ...?
YOU ARE..
...FROM THE CALEB FAMILY...THE ONE WHO PUT PRIMAVERA AND DISTRICT 23 ON THE LINE BACK THEN!?
...WHY, YOU LOOK AS IF YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST.
YES... AND NOW SHE'S HERE TO BE YOUR VOICE COACH.
MY DEAR FRIEND, AMANDA-SAN.

THE SHADOW ASSASSIN OF CHINA-TOWN...
HOTARU (CRY)
CALEB AND MIGUEL... KNEW OF YOU.
DOON (DING)
SO YOU'RE HOTARUBI...

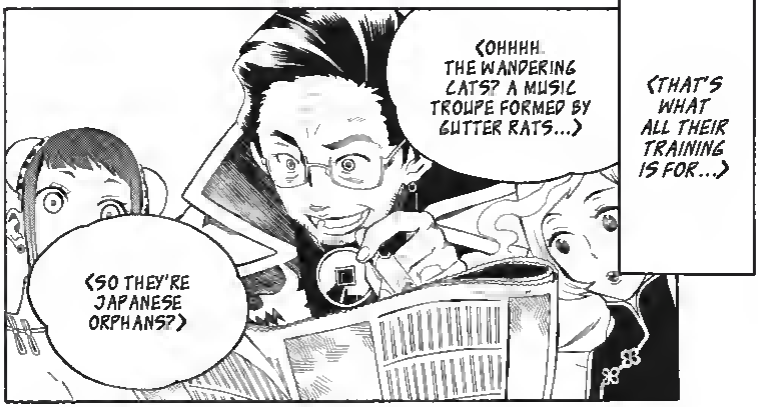
BECAUSE I HEARD THAT YOU WERE SHOT...
...IN THE SHOOTOUT AT PRIMA-VERA...?
NO ONE EVER SAID SHE WAS SHOT DEAD.
THAT'S JUST SOMETHING EVERYONE CONVINCED THEMSELVES OF.

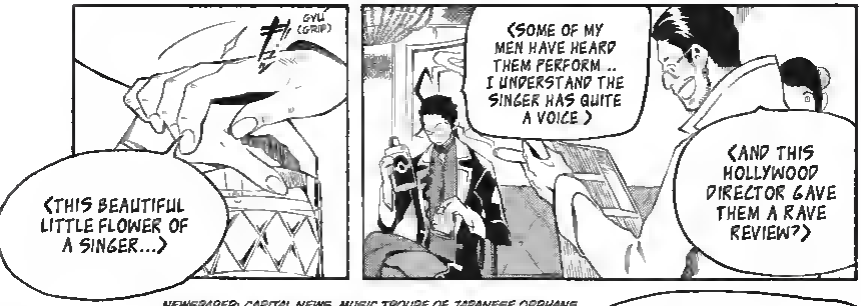

FATHER CALEB DID...!?

...IF YOU WANT TO SING WELL ENOUGH TO FOOL PEOPLE...
...YOU HAD BETTER BE READY TO PRACTICE UNTIL YOU'RE COUGHING BLOOD.

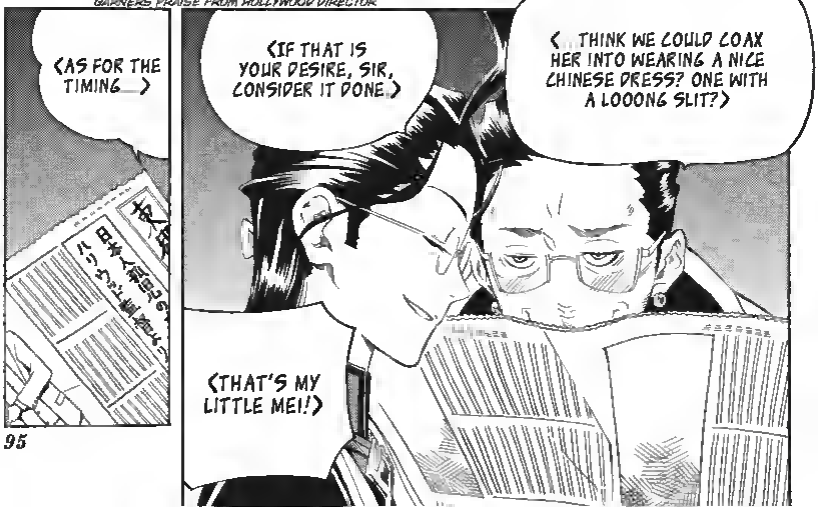
YES.
UM...
IS FATHER CALEB...
...STILL ALIVE?
NEWSPAPER: CAPITAL NEWS - MUSIC TROUPE OF JAPANESE ORPHANS GARNERS PRAISE FROM HOLLYWOOD DIRECTOR
東都新聞
日本人孤児による音楽隊 ハリウッド監督より賞賛
SASA (FLAP)
CHECK IT OUT!
EVERY PAPER IN TOWN'S GOT OUR MUGS ON IT!
S'LIKE WE'RE FAMOUS NOW.
GAN (SLAM)
DON'T LET IT GO TO YOUR HEADS, FOOLS.

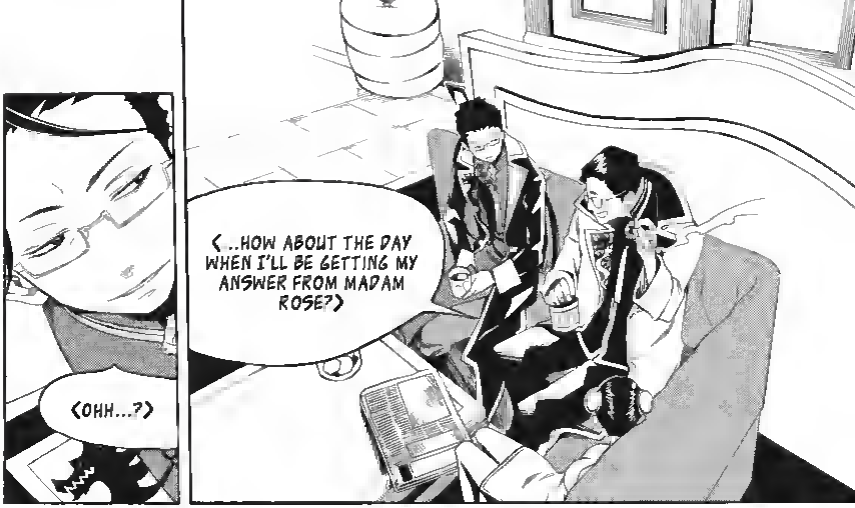
MEIJIU-SAN PAID GOOD MONEY TO GET THE PAPERS TO RUN THAT...
GAN CHUANG
IT'S ALL A SHAM.
〈...I DON'T FOLLOW.〉
〈AND THIS FAKE ARTICLE ...?〉
〈SHOOTING. THROWING KEYS. USING THAT ENHANCED TOY...〉
〈SING-ING...〉
〈WHAT SORT OF OPERA-TION IS THIS...?〉
NOW WE JUST NEED MEIJIU-SAN...
〈THAT MUST BE IT. 〉
!
〈...I SEE.〉
...TO WALK US THROUGH THE DOORS OF THAT RESTAURANT...
〈IT'S ALL SO THEY CAN INFILTRATE WANG'S STRONG-HOLD...〉


〈OHHHH. THE WANDERING CATS? A MUSIC TROUPE FORMED BY GUTTER RATS...〉
〈THAT'S WHAT ALL THEIR TRAINING IS FOR...〉
〈SO THEY'RE JAPANESE ORPHANS?〉

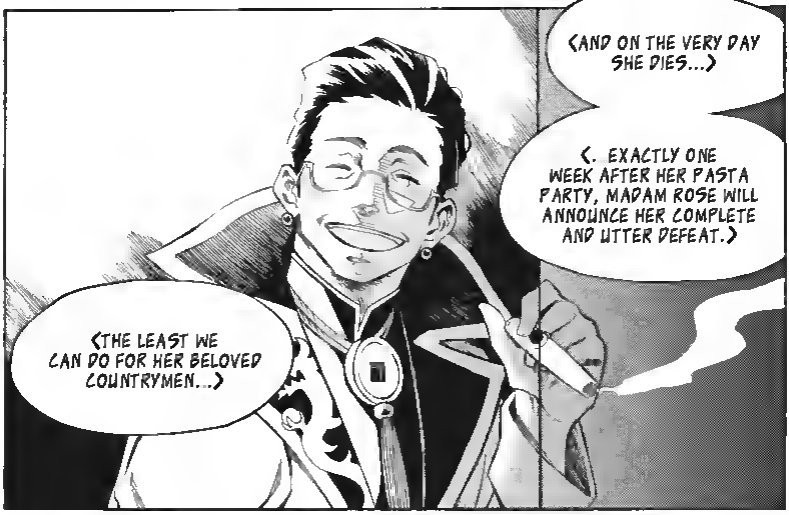

GYU (GRIP)
〈THIS BEAUTIFUL LITTLE FLOWER OF A SINGER...〉
〈SOME OF MY MEN HAVE HEARD THEM PERFORM .. I UNDERSTAND THE SINGER HAS QUITE A VOICE〉
〈AND THIS HOLLYWOOD DIRECTOR GAVE THEM A RAVE REVIEW?〉

NEWSPAPER: CAPITAL NEWS MUSIC TROUPE OF JAPANESE ORPHANS GARNERS PRAISE FROM HOLLYWOOD DIRECTOR


〈AS FOR THE TIMING...〉
〈IF THAT IS YOUR DESIRE, SIR, CONSIDER IT DONE.〉
〈...THINK WE COULD COAX HER INTO WEARING A NICE CHINESE DRESS? ONE WITH A LOOONG SLIT?〉
〈THAT'S MY LITTLE MEI!〉


〈..HOW ABOUT THE DAY WHEN I'LL BE GETTING MY ANSWER FROM MADAM ROSE?〉
〈OHH...?〉

〈.. TOWARDS THE DISSOLUTION OF HER WORKERS' UNION AND THE SALE OF THE EXCLUSIVITY RIGHTS.〉
〈TALK ABOUT TOWN IS THAT 〉
〈...MADAM ROSE HAS ALREADY STARTED TAKING ACTION ..〉

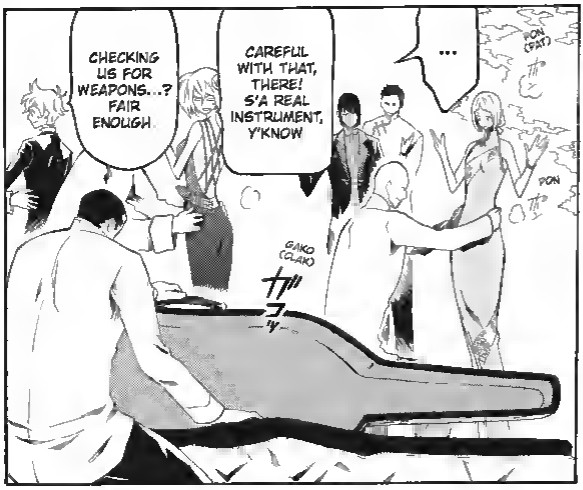

〈AND ON THE VERY DAY SHE DIES...〉
〈. EXACTLY ONE WEEK AFTER HER PASTA PARTY, MADAM ROSE WILL ANNOUNCE HER COMPLETE AND UTTER DEFEAT.〉
〈THE LEAST WE CAN DO FOR HER BELOVED COUNTRYMEN...〉

THE DAY OF THE OPERATION
ONE WEEK LATER
〈...IS SEND HER OFF WITH A LOVELY REQUIEM〉
—RESTAURANT MILLENNIUM
...THANK YOU, EVERYONE.
I GOTTA BE HONEST.
IT DOESN'T SEEM SO CRAZY ANY-MORE.
...JUST FOR THIS CRAZY MISSION...
YOU ALL WORKED SO HARD...
GAKO (KATHLEEN?)

WE'RE GONNA SHOW YEH HOW FAR WE CAME'N A WEEK...!
...WE'LL BE FINE.
WITH SUCH A CAREFUL PLAN AND PREPARATIONS...
1/10
'COS WE'RE THE BEST.
WE'RE THE WANDERING DOGS!
YEAHHH!!
KOTSU (STEP)
Hello, hello!

WE'RE HONORED TO ACCEPT YOUR INVITATION...
...MR. WANG.
MISS CAT ROSE!
I've been waiting for this.
WE'RE THE BACK ALLEY TROUPE...
...THE WANDERING CATS.

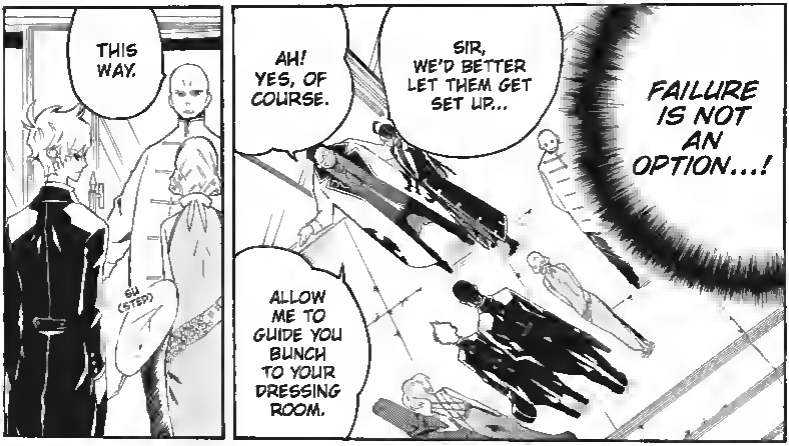
PLEASED TO MEET YOU, MR. WANG.
WE'RE THE BACK ALLEY TROUPE, THE WANDERING CATS.


CHECKING US FOR WEAPONS...? FAIR ENOUGH.
CAREFUL WITH THAT, THERE! S'A REAL INSTRUMENT, Y'KNOW
...
DON (PAT)
DON
GAKO (CLAK)

SU (STEP)
PARDON US. JUST A QUICK CHECK.

NO PROBLEMS HERE.
SO SORRY, BUT YOU UNDER-STAND!

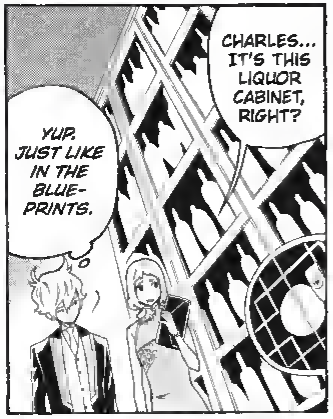
YOU SEE, TODAY...
...WE'RE WELCOMING MADAM ROSE OF PRIMAVERA.
OH, IS THAT SO...?
SO WE MUST BE SCRUPULOUS IN OUR SECURITY!
NA HA HA HA.
THAT'S RIGHT...
IF WE MESS THIS UP, MADAM ROSE'LL BE CAUGHT UP IN THE FALLOUT...

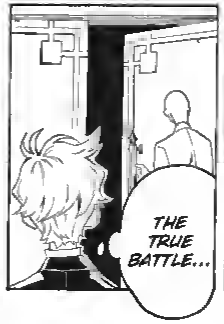

THIS WAY.
GIJ (STEP)
AH! YES, OF COURSE.
SIR, WE'D BETTER LET THEM GET SET UP...
FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION...!
ALLOW ME TO GUIDE YOU BUNCH TO YOUR DRESSING ROOM.

DOTO (DRUM)
...YOUR POWERS OF OBSERVATION...!
WANG... LET'S GO AND TEST...

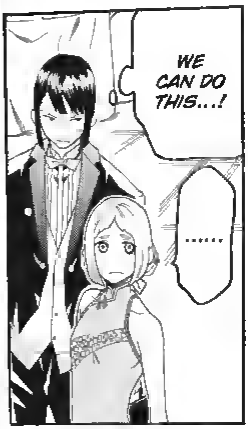
HUH...!?
...YOU, THERE!
DIDN'T YOU DROP SOME-THING?
YOU... UH...
TOO QUICK ...!
I'M S'POSED TO STEAL A KEY FROM HIS POCKET...?
THIS THING, SIR?
IMPOS-SIBLE...

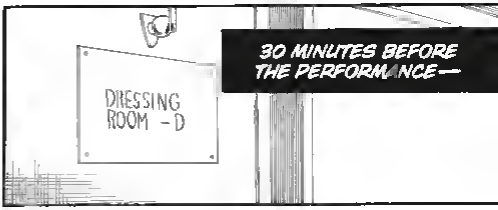
Track 14: My Country Home



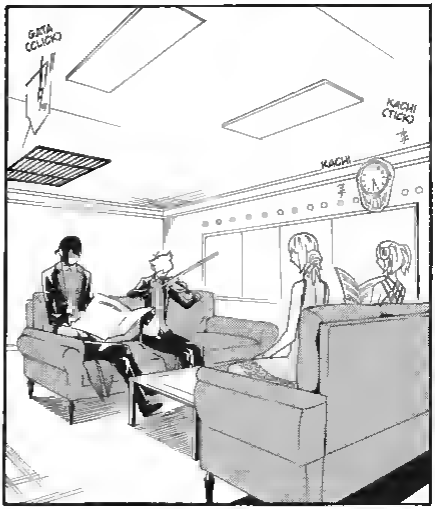


WAIT A BIT LONGER... FATHER!


WE CAN DO THIS...!
.....

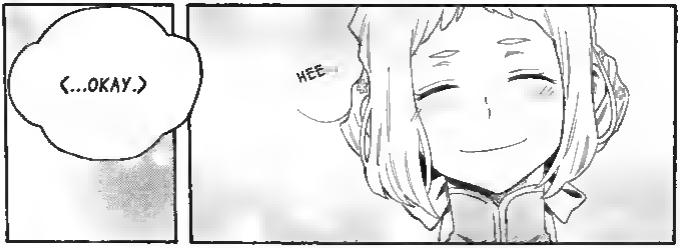

30 MINUTES BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE—
DRESSING ROOM - D

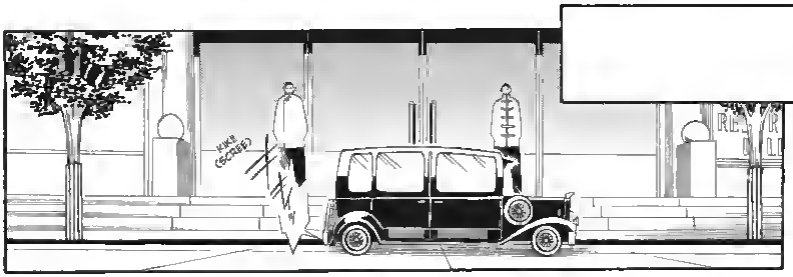
SAKAN (CLATTER)
!

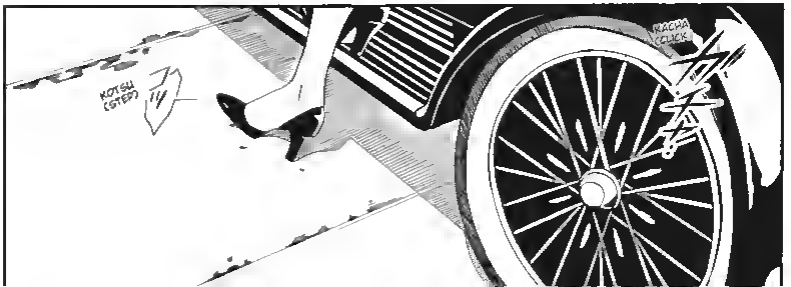

GATA (CLICK)
KACHI (TICK)
KACHI

GOGO (RUSTLE)
RIGHT ON TIME. NICE!
YEAH... NOW...
WE'VE GOT ALL WE NEED.
GOTO (CLUNK)
〈...I'LL BE OFF.〉
XIAO-LAN...!
〈...SAVE IT FOR ONCE YOU'VE SUCCEEDED〉
〈...THANK YOU, XIAO-LAN.〉
〈THIS OPERATION WOULD'VE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT YOUR HELP...〉

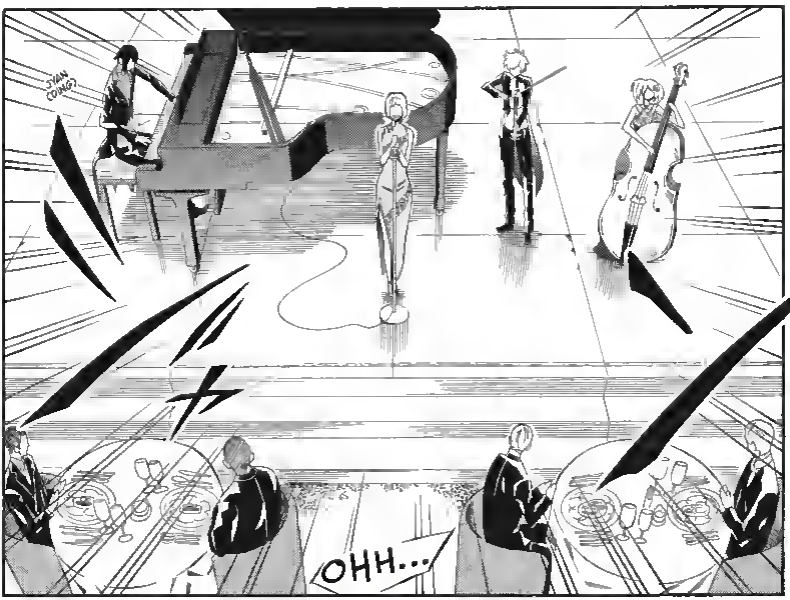
ONE THIS BIG
(YOU CAN THANK ME THEN WITH A BIG MOON CAKE!)


(...OKAY.)
HEE


KIKI (SCREE)


KOTSU (STEP)
KACHA (CLICK)

BATAN ISLAND
—6:30 P.M. MADAM ROSE ARRIVES
MEANWHILE, THE WANDERING CATS ARE PERFORMING...


JAZZ COMBO
OHH...

—6:55 P.M.

WHAT A LOVELY VOICE SHE HAS.
OHH... THIS ACAPELLA...
—ACAPELLA PERFORMANCE
I WOULD LOVE TO TREAT YOU ALL TO SOME OF THE BEST SPIRITS THIS WORLD HAS TO OFFER, BUT...
...MY LIQUOR CABINET ONLY OPENS DURING THE CHIMING OF THE CLOCK.
SU (STEP)
THAT'S NOT THE ONLY THING THAT WON'T OPEN...

I'VE GOT TO SECURE THAT DOOR BEFORE THEN...!
THERE'S ALSO THE REPOSITORY WHERE ZEL'S FATHER IS BEING KEPT.
FIVE MINUTES TO THE HOUR, NOW...
...I'M NO LONGER SOME MANGY DOG WHO'LL SNAP AT THE HEELS OF ANYONE HE COMES ACROSS.
(I WOULDN'T MIND HAVING A CUTIE SING LIKE THAT FOR ME...)
(...NICE VOICE SHE'S GOT.)
!

IF I WALK LIKE I'M SCARED, HE'LL HEAR MY FOOTSTEPS AND TURN.
...BUT...
JUST LIKE A CAT.
I'VE GOT TO GET PAST HIM QUIETLY...!
GU (PRESS)
...IF I WALK WITHOUT FEAR...
GU (STEP)
(!)

〈ALL CLEAR... NO ONE THERE.〉
〈..HUH?〉
〈GUESS NERVES LIKE THIS COME WITH THE JOB...〉
NICE.
THE FINAL MOVE.
BEYOND THAT DOOR...
...IS ZEL'S FATHER.

IF I'M SERIOUS ABOUT PAYING ZEL BACK FOR ALL HER KINDNESS...
...THEN THIS IS WHERE I'VE GOT TO MAKE IT COUNT...!!
LET'S GO, OLIVER.
GU (PRESS)
YURA (SWAY)
(!?)

DOSH (WHAM!)
<WHO THE HELL'RE Y—>
<GAHH...>
DOSH (THUD)
THE DOOR IS... SECUR-ED!
ドサ!

THE CLOCK'S CHIMING SEVEN...!!
DOON (GONG)
CREAK
WE NEED THAT KEY...!
WE'VE GOT ONE MINUTE UNTIL THE CHIMING STOPS.
GO (RUMBLE)
GO
GO
SO BEFORE THEN...
GACHA (CLICK)
WHICH SHALL WE TOAST WITH?
APOLOGIES FOR THE WAIT, MADAM ROSE.
<THAT ACAPELLA PERFORMANCE WAS SPECTACULAR...>
PACHI
PACHI (CLAP)
SO MANY OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM.
QUITE THE IMPRESSIVE MECHANISM.
WOW...!

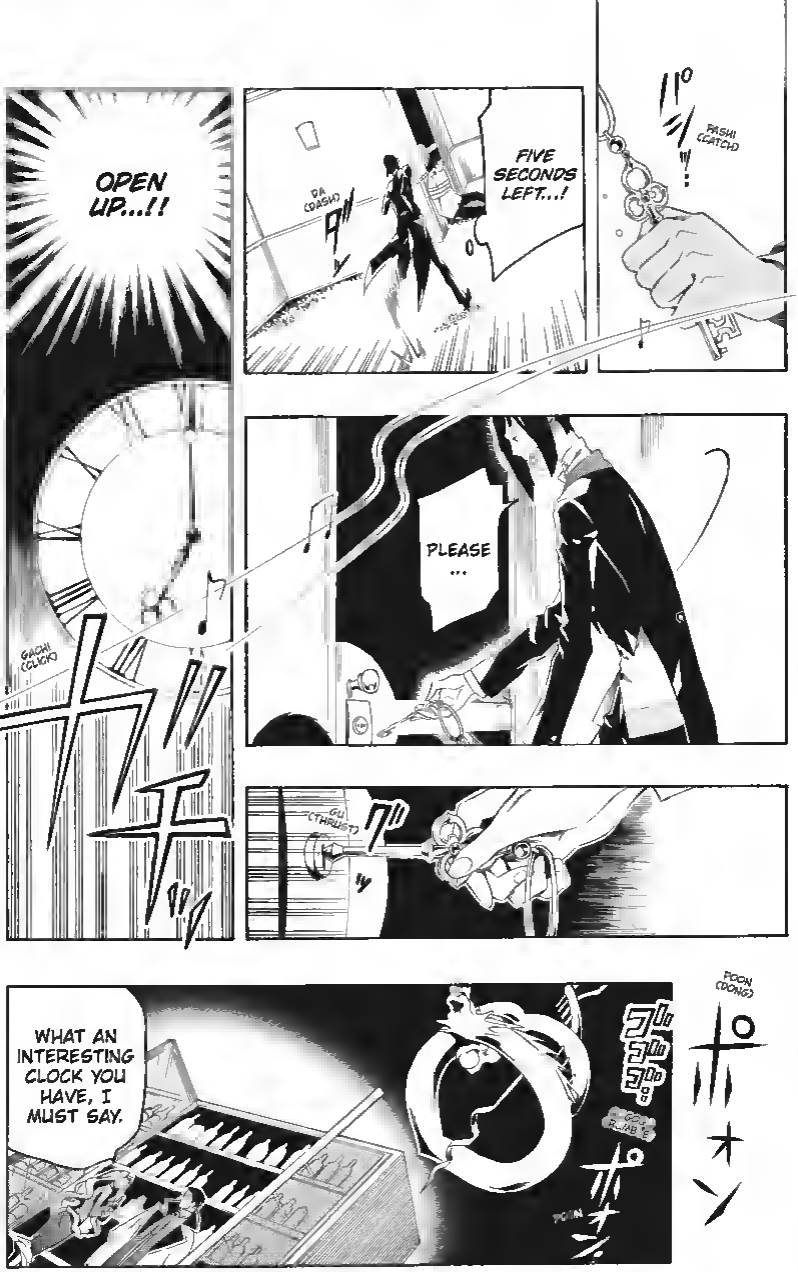
CLICK (RADIO)
<!>
TICK TOCK
THIS IS MY BEST CHANCE...!
THE KEY'S COMPLETELY UNGUARDED...
WHA—...?
BOOO (DAZED)
!
YOU IN POSITION, NINA...?

POCO (HAIRD)
THE HELL? THAT DAMN WAITER...!!
SHIT... WITH THAT GUY STANDING IN THE WAY...
...NINA CAN'T DO HER JOB!
IF IT WERE A GUEST, I COULD CALL HIM OVER TO CHAT...
...BUT THIS IS JUST A WAITER.
SHARIN (CLINK)
DO WE WAIT FOR HIM TO WALK AWAY...?
NO.
POON POON
THERE'S NO TIME...!

EU (PWIP)
SHUT IT.
OH? DO YOU HAVE A HARD TIME WITH FORKS, WAYNE-SAN?
AH...
(!)
...NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT.
WAYNE-SAN JUST HELPED US OUT...
THANKS TO BIG BRO WAYNE...
THE PATH IS TOTALLY CLEAR NOW.
KOCHI (TICK)
30 SECONDS LEFT..
WE'VE GOTTA GET THAT KEY TO OLIVER...!!

GU (FLIK)
GU (GRIP)
NINA.
IT'S UP TO YOU...!
HYU (PHISH)

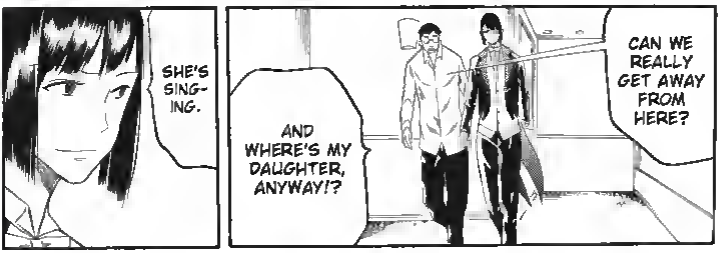
PASH! (CATCH)
LEAVE IT T'ME...
'ERE GOES NOTHING...!!
PIN (PWING)
GUN! (TUG)
KOCHIN (TICK)

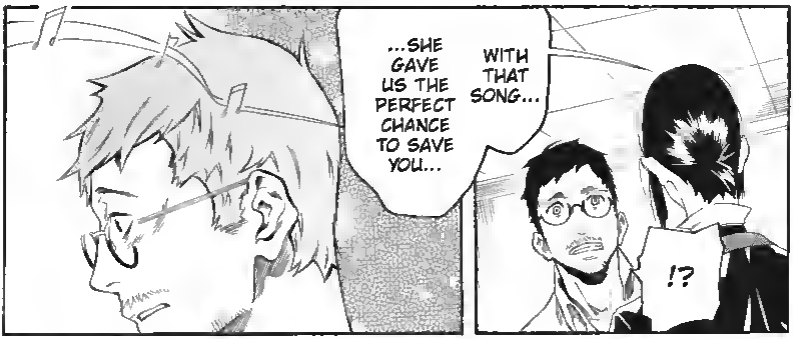

OPEN UP...!!
DA (DASH)
FIVE SECONDS LEFT...!
PASHI (CATCH)
PLEASE ...
GACHI (CLICK)
GU (THRUST)
WHAT AN INTERESTING CLOCK YOU HAVE, I MUST SAY.
GOLOLOLO (GOLOLOLO)
POON (DONG)
POON (DONG)

SATAN (SHUT)
(CRASH) (ANGLE)
OHHH, I SEE YOU'RE NOT THE HEAD LADY OF THE NIGHT FOR NOTHING!
AND WITH SO MANY OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM, I WAS A LITTLE LOST.
GRI (CREAK)
THAT'S A FINE WINE YOU'VE CHOSEN...
MADE IT IN TIME...
NIKA (GRIN)
COME NOW. LET'S HAVE OUR TOAST OVER HERE...!
.....

WE MADE IT...!!
GR (CREAK)
IT'S OPEN ...!?
...!
DOSE (THUD)
WHAT'S GOING ON!?
DAMN. HEAVY ONE, AREN'T YOU...?
YOU'RE ...
...HOTARU SAIJOU'S FATHER, RIGHT!?

YES, BUT... WHO ARE YOU?
I'M OLIVER ORIBE!
A FRIEND OF YOUR DAUGHTER'S.

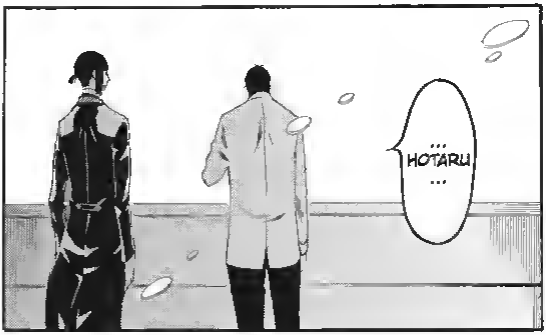

SHE'S SING-ING.
AND WHERE'S MY DAUGHTER, ANYWAY!?
CAN WE REALLY GET AWAY FROM HERE?

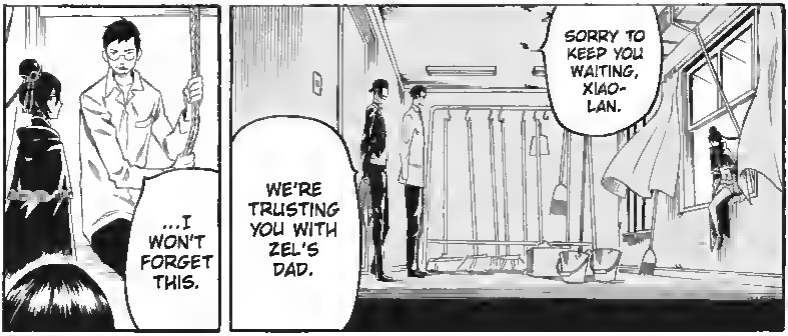

...SHE GAVE US THE PERFECT CHANCE TO SAVE YOU...
WITH THAT SONG...
!?

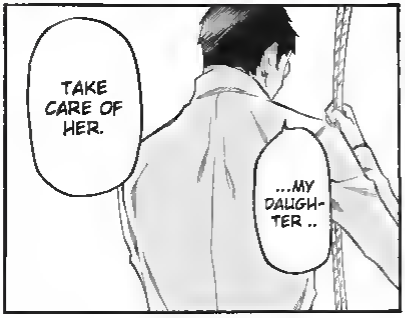
BACK IN THE MOUNTAINS I KNEW AS A CHILD.
<It's a nice little way...>
<...to wish for happiness, for your country and family...>
<With this next song...>
<I'd like to introduce you all to a piece of Japan.>
MEMORIES, I CARRY THESE WHEREVER I MAY ROAM
FISH FILLED THE RIVERS AND RABBITS RAN WILD

I HEAR IT CALLING ME, MY COUNTRY HOME.
.....

STAFF ONLY


...HOTARU...

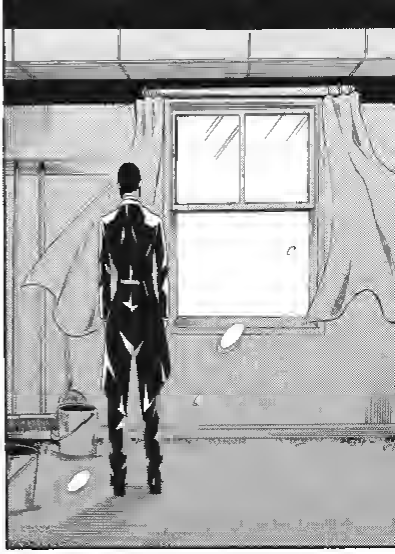

...I WON'T FORGET THIS.
WE'RE TRUSTING YOU WITH ZEL'S DAD.
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING, XIAO-LAN.

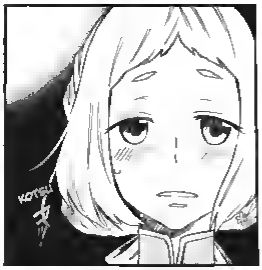

TAKE CARE OF HER.
...MY DAUGHTER ..

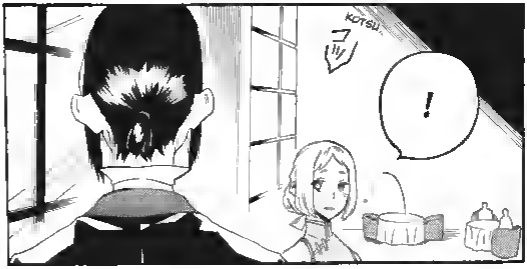
I'D RISK MY LIFE A THOUSAND TIMES TO SEE ZEL SMILE.
WE'RE FRIENDS ...
...AND FAMILY.

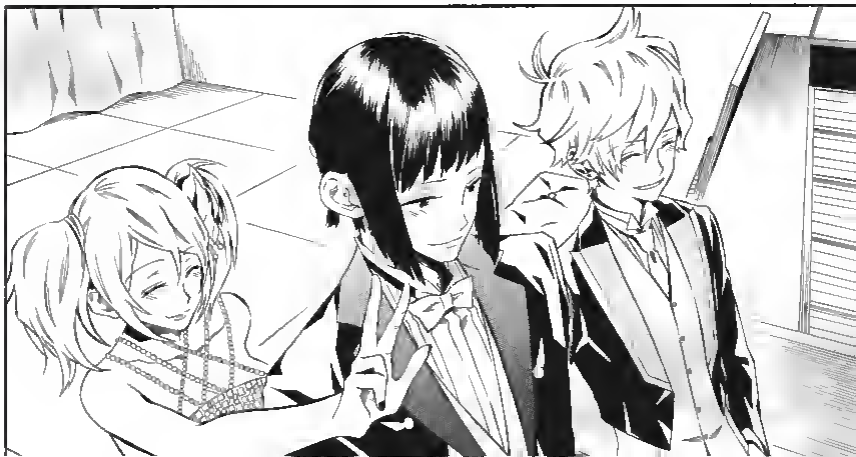
...OF...
...OF COURSE.
SIGH (CREAK)

KOTSU (STEP)
PACHI (CLAP)
PACHI
YEAHH!




KOTSU


KOTSU
!



SHALL WE GET DOWN TO BUSINESS?
...NOW THEN...
THIS SUMMARIZES OUR POSITION ON THE MATTER.
YOU WILL HAND OVER THE EXCLUSIVITY RIGHTS AND DISSOLVE YOUR UNION.
ONCE YOU SIGN THAT...
...YOU WILL USHER IN ETERNAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE GOLDEN DRAGONS AND PRIMAVERA.

AND IF I DON'T SIGN...?
YOU WILL LOSE ALL PROTECTION FROM US.
TCH.
WHAT "PROTECTION"...?
...PRIMAVERA AND THE GOLDEN DRAGONS.
WE MAY CALL DIFFERENT COUNTRIES HOME, BUT WE SHARE THE DESIRE TO PROTECT OUR OWN.
WE SHOULDN'T BE AT ODDS WITH EACH OTHER.
I SUPPOSE WE MUST PUT AN IMMEDIATE END TO THIS STRIFE...
...YOU'RE A WISE WOMAN.
IT'S IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE, GOING FORWARD.
...NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.

〈LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!〉
〈LET'S HEAR ONE MORE WARM ROUND OF APPLAUSE...〉
〈...FOR OUR WONDERFUL PERFORMERS TONIGHT...!〉
YEAHHHH!
〈THANK YOU...!〉
PACHI (CLAP)
PACHI
ONCE THIS APPLAUSE DIES DOWN...
...WE'LL GET IN THE CAR AND LEAVE.
〈TEAM UP WITH ME, AND I'LL MAKE YOU THE BIGGEST SINGER IN ALL OF TOKYO〉
ALMOST THERE
〈I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU BUNCH ARE IN GREAT DEMAND FOR THE TIME BEING...〉
〈...BUT HAVE YOU GIVEN THOUGHT TO WHAT COMES AFTER THAT...?〉
ALMOST THERE...
THAT'S WHEN THE OPERATION WILL HAVE SUCCEEDED.
NADE (RUB)
なぇ?

!!
I'LL GET TO SEE FATHER AGAIN...
〈..THAT'S..〉
〈...AN ODD TATTOO YOU'VE GOT, ISN'T IT?〉
〈TH-THERE'S TROUBLE, BOSS!〉
〈THE REPOSITORY GUARD'S MISSING...!〉
〈!〉
〈WE CAN'T FIND HIM ANY-WHERE...!!〉

〈NOBODY MOVE...!〉
BAM (THUD)
JYAKI (KACHAK)
BA (THUD)
BA (CRASH)
〈ONE MOVE AND HE GETS IT.〉
〈OW, OW, OW.〉

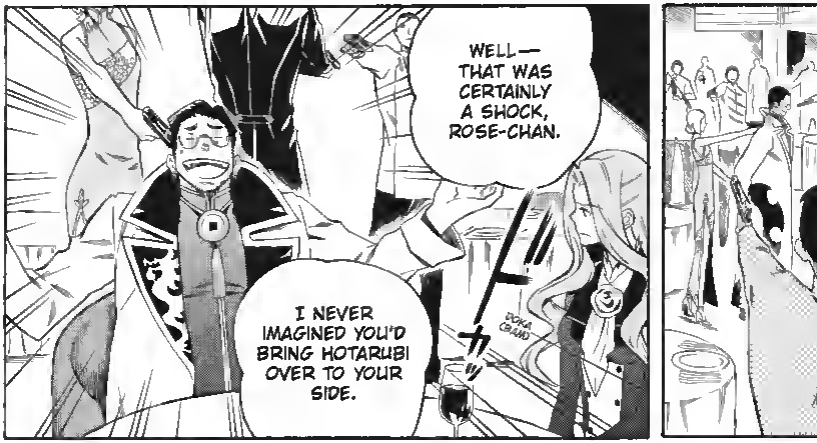
SHE'S TALKING TO ALL OF YOU.
SAWA (CHATTER)
NOT ONE STEP!!
...!
<TA-HA-HA-HA...>
<I REMEMBER THAT TATTOO NOW...>
WE GOT THIS FAR, ONLY T'GET OUR COVER BLOWN...?
WHAT A MESS!!

〈YOU'RE...〉
〈...HOTARUBI...?〉
〈...I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER MY FATHER ALL THIS TIME...〉
〈...MR. WANG...!〉

Last Numbers You've Got a Friend

NO... IMPOSSIBLE...!
TO REACH YOUR FATHER, YOU'D NEED MY SPECIAL KEY...!?
THERE WAS NO CHANCE FOR YOU TO STEAL IT.
AND THE CLOCK! THE GUARD!
MY DEVICE IS THE PERFECT DEFENSE!?
SHUT UP FOR A MINUTE, WOULD YOU?
OW, OW, OW.
CALM DOWN, CALM DOWN.
EVEN IF YOU SHOOT ME, YOU'RE STILL IN THE HORNET'S NEST.
TCH...
CLEAR A PATH!
OR DO YOU WANT YOUR BOSS TO EAT IT?
DAMN. WE'RE TOTALLY OUTNUMBERED...
ZURA (GGK)
...ZEL.
...!

WHAT DO WE DO?
WH—
WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO RETURN HIM TO HIS SEAT...?
I BELIEVE THAT WANG-SAN AND I...
...WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN IMPORTANT CONVERSATION.
IF THAT'S ...
...WHAT SHE WANTS...


WELL— THAT WAS CERTAINLY A SHOCK, ROSE-CHAN.
I NEVER IMAGINED YOU'D BRING HOTARUBI OVER TO YOUR SIDE.
KUKA CRASH

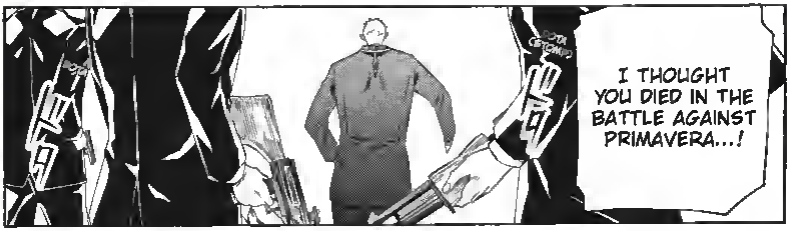
KARA (GLIDE)
KARA
.....
I TAKE IT YOU HAVE AN ANSWER FOR ME?
BUT LETTING ME RETURN TO MY SEAT LIKE THIS.
OH, SO YOU WANT ME TO CALL MY MEN...
...AND HAVE THEM TAKE THE APPROPRIATE ACTION?
I'M NOT THE SORT TO BE THREATENED INTO MAKING AN INSINCERE CALL.
YOU OUGHT TO UNDERSTAND THAT.
.....
MR. WANG.
GATA (STAND)
PRIMAVERA'S ANSWER IS...
...THIS.

BITA (POUR)
TA
TA
TA
<SHE JUST POURED WINE ALL OVER...>
<...THE CONTRACT ...>
I SEE... THAT SETTLES IT, THEN.
HA HA HA HA...
HEH HEH HEH HEH...
TCH

THIS...
...MEANS WAR, I'M AFRAID.
〈...IT'S ME〉
〈GATHER ALL THE TROOPS AND GET THEM TO MILLENNIUM.〉
〈ALL OF THEM!!〉

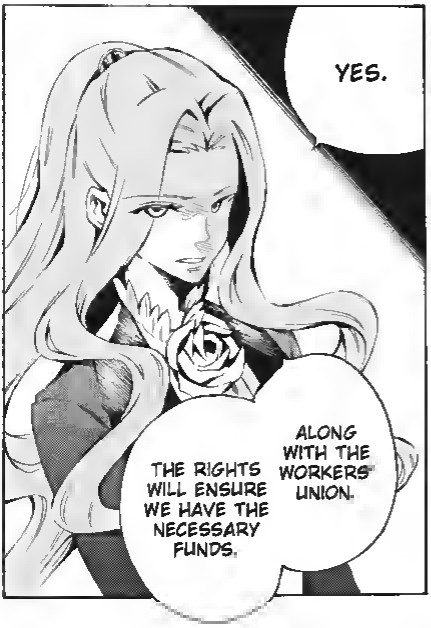
WILL YOU STILL REFUSE TO SIGN!?
YOU MAY THINK YOU'RE THE KING, BUT I'VE GOT YOU IN CHECKMATE NOW...

(STEP)
〈W— ...〉
〈WE HAVE COMPANY ...〉
〈B-BOSS.〉
〈WHAT!?〉
HOWDY.
YUANHONG.
CA— ...
CALEB!?



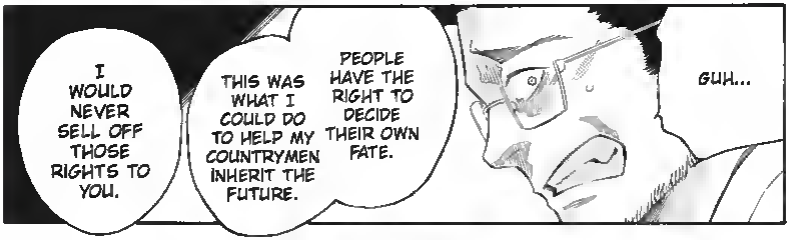
BUT, Y'SEE, MADAM ROSE, OVER THERE...
...SHE'S THE WOMAN WHO WENT AND TOOK OVER MY FAMILY.
ME? DIE? NOT LIKELY.
CHAKA
CHAKA
CHAKA

<WHY...? HOW?>
<WHY'S EVERY BIG NAME FAMILY OUT THERE BACKING UP THIS GIRL!?>
<PRELIMINARY REPORTS SHOWED THAT PRIMAVERA WAS PREPARING TO HAND OVER THE EXCLUSIVITY RIGHTS!?>
<BUT NOW...?>
...!
AH.
<...IN THE BELLY OF THE DRAGON...!!>
ONE WORD FROM ME, AND THEY'LL COME DOWN ON YOU LIKE AN AVALANCHE!!
A THOUSAND GUNS!?
WHAT!?
<BOSS... THE RESTAURANT'S COMPLETELY SURROUNDED.>
<AND IT'S NOT JUST CALEB'S ARMY!>
<CYRUS SAIMURA IS LEADING THE CHARGE WITH PRIMAVERA'S MEN..>
<BUT THERE'S ALSO THE CAGLIOSTINI FAMILY FROM DISTRICT 7...>
<...AND THE ORLANDO BROTHERS' FAMILY FROM DISTRICT 21...>
<THIS WHOLE PLACE... WE'RE...>
146


YES.
THE RIGHTS WILL ENSURE WE HAVE THE NECESSARY FUNDS.
ALONG WITH THE WORKERS' UNION.

THE EXCLUSIVITY RIGHTS...
YOU SOLD THEM TO ALL OF THEM...

D-DON'T TELL ME.

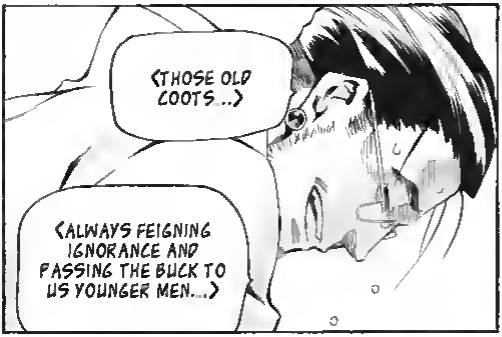

I WOULD NEVER SELL OFF THOSE RIGHTS TO YOU.
THIS WAS WHAT I COULD DO TO HELP MY COUNTRYMEN INHERIT THE FUTURE.
PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE THEIR OWN FATE.
GUH...

...FOR A BRIEF AND FLEETING MOMENT OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY!
GATA (STAND)
I REFUSE TO SELL THE NEXT GENERATION'S FUTURE...
WE WILL NOT YIELD!

FOR ZEL!
FOR OLIVER!
FOR CHARLES!
FOR NINA!
THEY'RE GOING TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN FUTURE!!
THIS WORLD OF 1948... IT'S ALL OLD NEWS...
THESE KIDS ARE GOING TO LIVE TO SEE THE YEAR 2000.
I REFUSE TO GIVE AWAY THEIR BRIGHT FUTURES!!
GUH...
UGHHH...

URP...
COUGH.
COUGH.
COUGH.
〈...YES I'LL PUT HIM ON.〉

〈...MUST BE THE ELDER COUNCIL, RIGHT?〉
〈ASKING HOW I'M GOING TO DEAL WITH THIS MESS...?〉
〈...PHONE CALL FOR YOU, SIR.〉
HA-
HA-


〈THOSE OLD COOTS...〉
〈ALWAYS FEIGNING IGNORANCE AND PASSING THE BUCK TO US YOUNGER MEN...〉

〈NEVER BOTHERING TO LOOK FORWARD.. TO THE FUTURE.....〉
SU (FWIP)
〈THEY ONLY EVER THINK ABOUT THE "NOW"...〉

<...Hello, Yuanhong.>
COUGH!
(...HELLO)
<It's been too long.>
(YOUNG... MASTER)
<Call for backup...>
BAN
DA (RATATA)
DADADA
(CALL FOR BACKUP QUICK...!)
BAN (SLAM)
(BUT EVERYONE'S AT...)

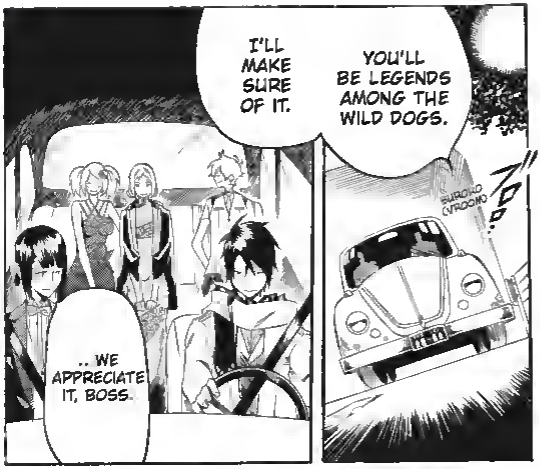
〈...SO THEY WILL NOW TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.〉
〈OUR ESTEEMED ELDERS INVITED UNDUE DANGER TO DISTRICT 22 AND THE GOLDEN DRAGONS...〉
〈Everyone's over at Millennium...!?〉
FAN (SFX)
COUGH
〈.....〉
〈You can't be serious...〉
〈GOING FORWARD... WILL YOU LEND ME YOUR STRENGTH?〉
〈...YUANHONG.〉
〈If only your dearly departed father could see you now...〉
〈You've truly ascended his throne...〉
〈.....〉
〈.....〉
〈WELL DONE...〉

〈I, YUANHONG WANG, PLEDGED MY LOYALTY TO THE ELDER COUNCIL.〉
〈YOU MAY BE OUR YOUNG MASTER, BUT...〉
〈...THAT'S NOT ENOUGH TO MAKE ME GO BACK ON MY WORD...〉
HMPH...
〈I THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO THE GOLDEN DRAGONS.〉
〈..YUAN-HONG〉
〈DESPITE YOUR LOYAL NATURE, I COULD NEVER BRING YOU TO TRUST ME...〉
〈I WAS UNWORTHY. THAT IS THE TRUE CRIME HERE.〉
CHIN (CHIN)
COUGH...
〈...I IMPLORE YOU.〉
〈LOOK AFTER THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRYMEN... YOUNG MASTER.〉
PATA (PATA)

...RIGHT.
TASTELESS, ODORLESS... IF I HAD ACTUALLY BEEN GIVEN THAT HEART-STOPPING POISON ONE WEEK AGO...
...YOU WOULD'VE BEEN CORRECT.
COUGH.
HOW ODD... I WAS SURE THAT...
...IF SOMEONE WERE TO FALL, IT WOULD BE YOU...
COUGH!
COUGH!
COUGH...
<BOSS!>
GATAN (THUMP)
<SO THE POISON IN THAT RING...>
<...WAS NEVER USED...>
<...I SEE.>
<SHE GOT HER HANDS ON THE POISON... AND IT FOUND ITS WAY TO LITTLE MEI...>

〈...LITTLE MEI.〉
GOKU (GULP)
GYU (GRIP)
〈...IS ALL YOURS...〉
〈AS PROMISED.〉
〈MY REMAINING TIME ON THIS EARTH.〉
〈AND PLEASE, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.〉
〈LEAVE THE REST TO ME.〉
〈...SIR.〉

BATAN (CLANK)
(THE AMBULANCE IS PULLING OUT.)
(MAKE WAY, MAKE WAY.)
ZAWA (CHATTER)
ZAWA
...IS IN GOOD HANDS.
...ZEL'S FATHER...
...!
BUBOORO (VROOM)

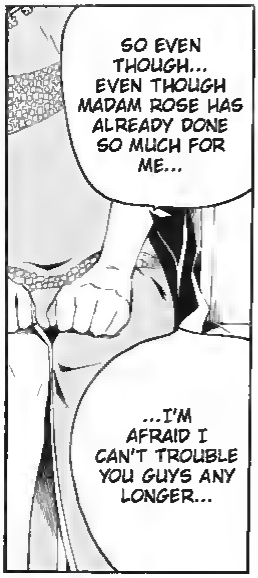

I'LL MAKE SURE OF IT.
YOU'LL BE LEGENDS AMONG THE WILD DOGS.
SUBOSHI GYAOOHO
.. WE APPRECIATE IT, BOSS.

WELL DONE, YOU GUYS.

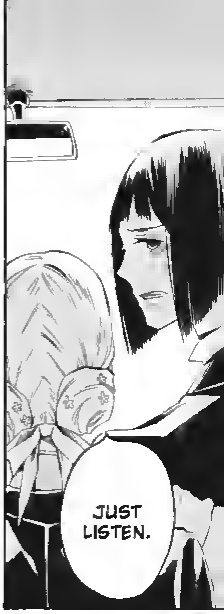
...I'D RATHER BE ONE OF THE REAL LIFE WANDERING DOGS!
BUT MORE THAN JUST BEING A "LEGEND"...

WITH ZEL SAIJOU LEADIN' US...
...WE'RE THE STRONGEST QUARTET 'ROUND.
DAMN STRAIGHT!
WE'RE THE WANDERING DOGS!

BECAUSE ZEL'S ABOUT TO BOARD A SHIP...
...AND LEAVE THIS COUNTRY WITH HER FATHER.
...NO.
AS OF TONIGHT, THE WANDERING DOGS ARE NO MORE.
...WHA—?
...HANG ON, OLIVER.
WE'RE GONNA BE TOGETHER FOREVER...!
ZEL'S OUR FRIEND.
OUR FAMILY.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?


SO EVEN THOUGH... EVEN THOUGH MADAM ROSE HAS ALREADY DONE SO MUCH FOR ME...
...I'M AFRAID I CAN'T TROUBLE YOU GUYS ANY LONGER...

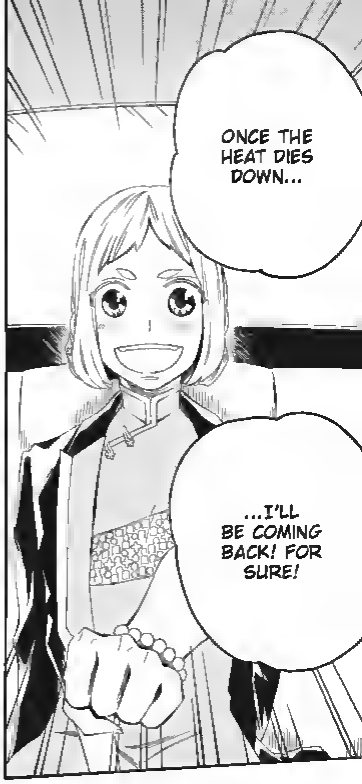
AS YOU ALL KNOW...
...MY FATHER AND I ARE WANTED BY THE CHINESE MILITARY FOR BREAKING OUT OF PRISON.
THEY'LL GET WIND OF US SOONER OR LATER FROM THE GOLDEN DRAGONS...


JUST LISTEN.

THAT'S WHY...
...THE WANDERING DOGS ARE HEREBY DISBANDED!

...NO.
WE ALL LOST OUR FAMILIES...
...IN THE GREAT CATASTRO-PHE...
...DO WE HAVE TO SUFFER THAT LOSS AGAIN...?
SO WHY...
GO (GO)
GU!!
.....
...IT WON'T BE DEATH THAT SEPARATES YOU.
...AT LEAST THIS TIME...

SO LISTEN, GUYS!
OLIVER!
CHARLES!
NINA!
I NEED TO HEAR IT FROM YOU.


ONCE THE HEAT DIES DOWN...
...I'LL BE COMING BACK! FOR SURE!

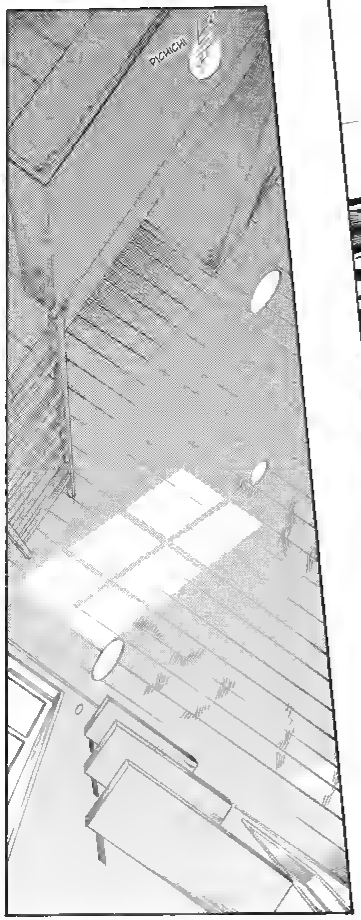
YEAH...

YOU'LL KEEP THINGS NICE AND TIDY, RIGHT?
YOU WON'T FORGET TO CLEAN OR DO LAUNDRY?
YOU'LL TAKE BATHS EVERY DARN DAY!
YEAH, WE WILL...

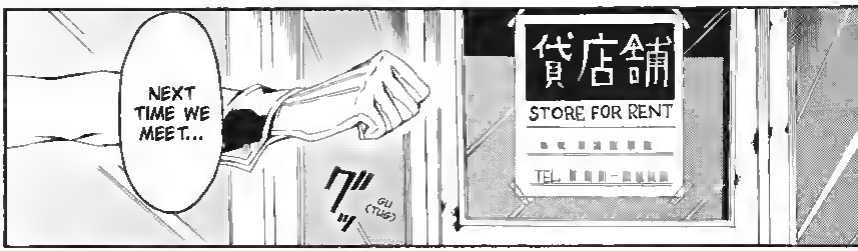
I WANT YOU TO SURPRISE ME WHEN WE MEET AGAIN!
SHOW ME WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF!
KEEP TRAINING THOSE SKILLS OF YOURS, OLIVER.
UNTIL YOU'RE ALPHA WOLF OF THE WILD DOGS!
YEAH...!

DADDY...!!
KIKI (SOBBING)
GACHA (OPEN)

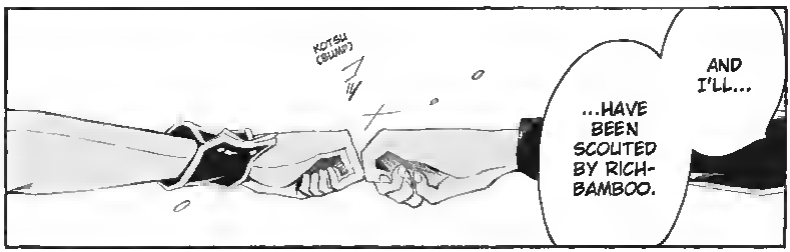
PICHICHI
CHIRP


PICHICHI

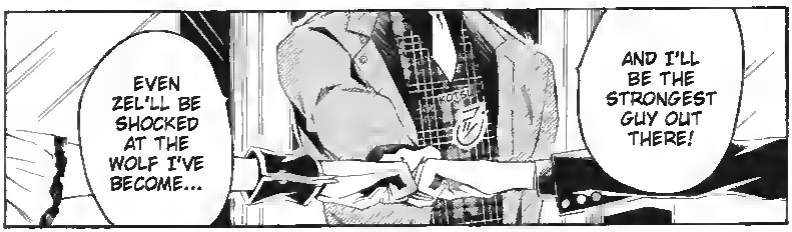
ZAAA
(SPLASH)


NEXT TIME WE MEET...
GU (TUG)
貸店舗
STORE FOR RENT

...I'LL BE A HOT-T'TROT CALLGIRL WHO CAN SPEAK CHINESE!


KOTSU (BUMP)
...HAVE BEEN SCOUTED BY RICH-BAMBOO.
AND I'LL...

...THESE MAGIC FINGERS'LL BE ON A WHOLE 'NOTHER LEVEL.
NEXT TIME WE MEET...


EVEN ZEL'LL BE SHOCKED AT THE WOLF I'VE BECOME...
AND I'LL BE THE STRONGEST GUY OUT THERE!

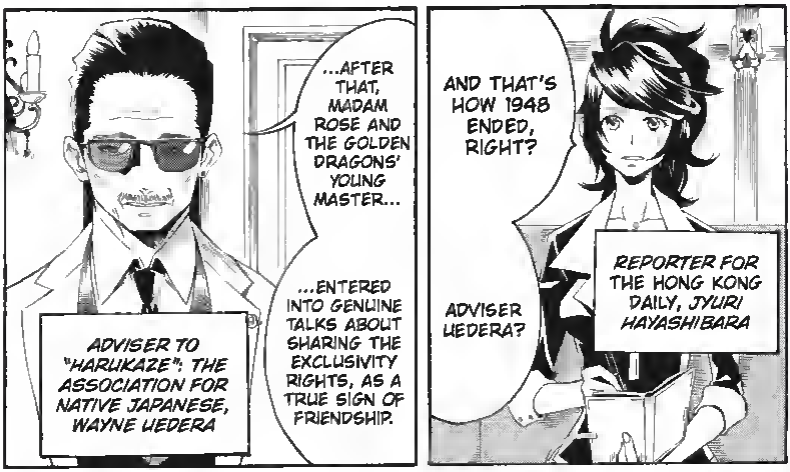
FAREWELL, GUYS.
SO UNTIL THEN, THE WANDERING DOGS ARE DISBANDED...
HERE'S TO OUR SUCCESS!
GAN GAN

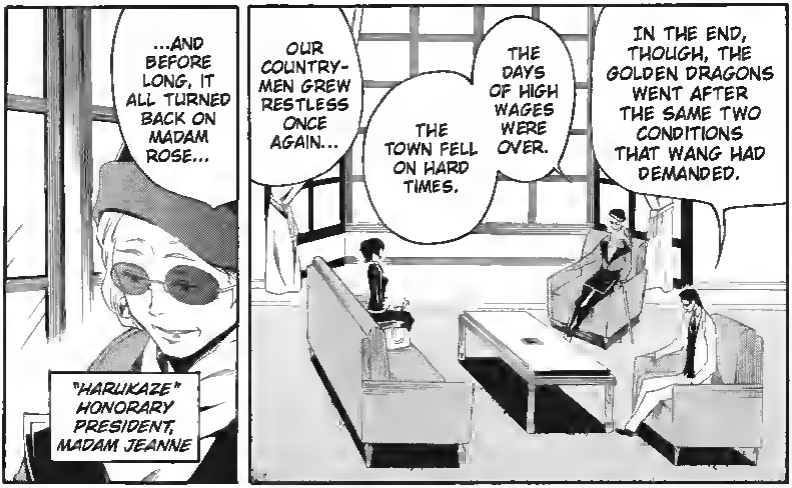
Song

I'LL SURPRISE YOU, ZEL.

NEVER AGAIN.
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO LOOK AT ME LIKE I'M UNRELIABLE EVER AGAIN.

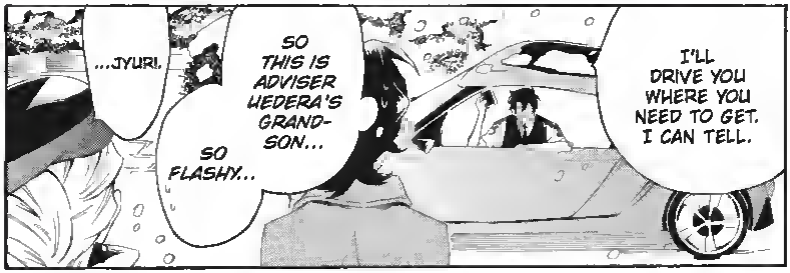
2012—WINTER IN TOKYO
...SO PRIMAVERA AND THE GOLDEN DRAGONS...
...NARROWLY AVOIDED ALL-OUT WAR.

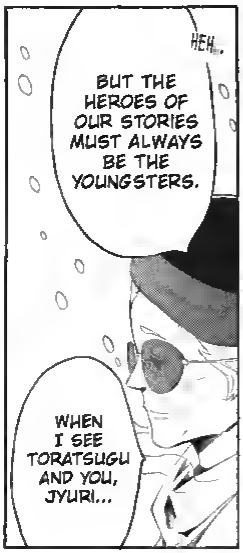

AND THAT'S HOW 1948 ENDED, RIGHT?
REPORTER FOR THE HONG KONG DAILY, JYURI HAYASHIBARA
ADVISER HEDERA?
...AFTER THAT, MADAM ROSE AND THE GOLDEN DRAGONS' YOUNG MASTER...
...ENTERED INTO GENUINE TALKS ABOUT SHARING THE EXCLUSIVITY RIGHTS, AS A TRUE SIGN OF FRIENDSHIP.
ADVISER TO "HARUKAZE": THE ASSOCIATION FOR NATIVE JAPANESE, WAYNE HEDERA


IN THE END, THOUGH, THE GOLDEN DRAGONS WENT AFTER THE SAME TWO CONDITIONS THAT WANG HAD DEMANDED.
THE DAYS OF HIGH WAGES WERE OVER.
THE TOWN FELL ON HARD TIMES.
OUR COUNTRYMEN GREW RESTLESS ONCE AGAIN...
...AND BEFORE LONG, IT ALL TURNED BACK ON MADAM ROSE...
"HARUKAZE" HONORARY PRESIDENT, MADAM JEANNE

TORATSUGU UEDERA
AH, JYURI-SAN.
DONE WITH THE JOB?

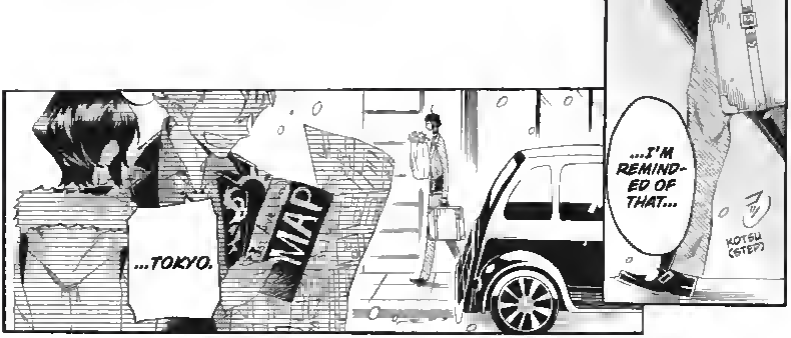
.....


...JYURI.
SO THIS IS ADVISER UEDERA'S GRAND-SON...
SO FLASHY...
I'LL DRIVE YOU WHERE YOU NEED TO GET. I CAN TELL.

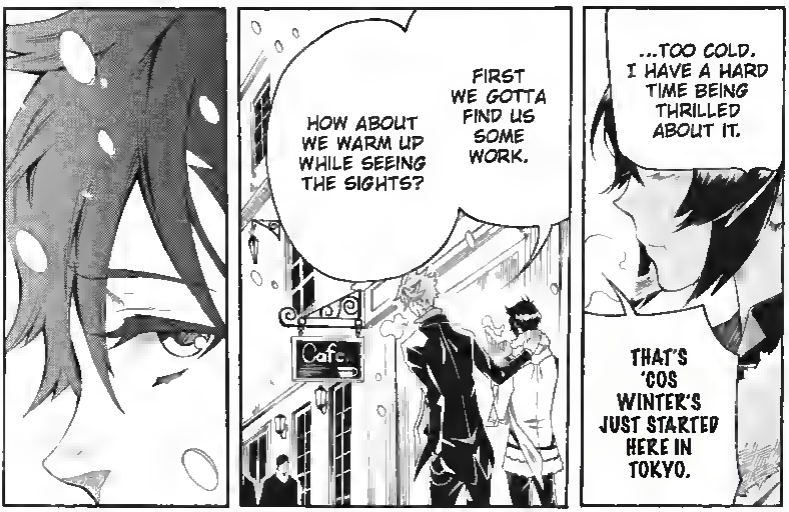

HEH.
BUT THE HEROES OF OUR STORIES MUST ALWAYS BE THE YOUNGSTERS.
WHEN I SEE TORATSUGU AND YOU, JYURI...

I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW HOW PRIMAVERA, UNDER THE CHARITABLE MADAM ROSE...
YES.
...WOULD EVENTUALLY TURN INTO THE "HARUKAZE" OF TODAY...
I LOOK FORWARD TO OUR TALK.

NEXT TIME... WE'LL TALK ABOUT THE EVENTS OF 1949.
ABOUT HOW MADAM ROSE'S PRIMAVERA...
...BECAME THE MORE VIOLENT ORGANIZATION EVERYONE IS FAMILIAR WITH.


...TOKYO.
MAP
...I'M REMINDED OF THAT...
KOTSU (STEP)

WE SURVIVED SIBERIA AND MADE IT HOME!!
BIGHI (POINT)
IT MIGHT BE BURSTING WITH ENGLISH, AND IT SURE AIN'T THE TOKYO I REMEMBER...
...BUT STILL, THIS IS TOKYO, KEITH!


HOW ABOUT WE WARM UP WHILE SEEING THE SIGHTS?
FIRST WE GOTTA FIND US SOME WORK.
Café
...TOO COLD. I HAVE A HARD TIME BEING THRILLED ABOUT IT.
THAT'S 'COS WINTER'S JUST STARTED HERE IN TOKYO.

ROSE GUNS DAYS Season 2 End

Special Interview With Ryukishi07

To close out the conclusion to the manga version of *ROSE GUNS DAYS Season 2*, we got to sit down with the series' original creator, Ryukishi07, to ask him some questions. There are a lot of fun facts buried in the interview, so please enjoy it!

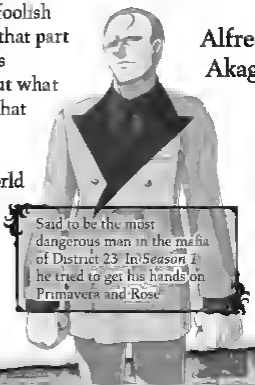
Ryukishi07-sensei, in creating the PC game *ROSE GUNS DAYS*, what was at the core of what you hoped to portray?

The concept of the "Japanese," which we are seldom aware of as we go through life so blithely. I think the current era is one in which we've forgotten what it means to be Japanese. Shortly before I came up with the concept for *RGD*, I had the opportunity to visit France and Taiwan, where I got to interact with the local populations quite a bit. I noticed something that really shocked me. They all really loved their respective countries, and it was a given to them that they'd stand up and take responsibility for their homelands if need be. I told them, "If a Japanese person starts saying patriotic things, they're seen as a political extremist, so most of them would never talk about 'loving' their home country of Japan." The foreigners I was talking to were totally shocked by that.

After experiencing that sort of culture shock several times, I decided that I wanted my Japanese readers to think about what it means to be Japanese.

One more key point. I also wanted to illustrate to foreign readers how mysterious and, at times, irresponsible, the Japanese are. The Japanese readers, too, could see how strange a country Japan is, but from a different perspective. Those were the concepts that led me to come up with this series and pack it full of so many messages.

As for what those many messages are, I'd feel a bit foolish explaining each one, so you'll forgive me for skipping that part. What I wanted to communicate by writing this story is something that can't really be explained in words, about what it means to live as Japanese people. It's meant to start that conversation.


Alfred Akagi
Said to be the most dangerous man in the mafia of District 23. In *Season 1* he tried to get his hands on Primavera and Rose.

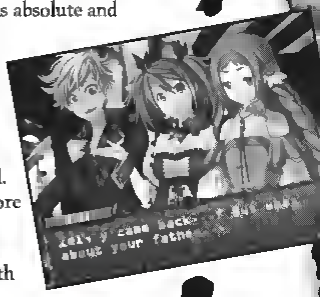
While creating the noir sensibilities of the *RGD* world and painting a picture of violence and darkness, what were you particularly careful about?

I wracked my mind trying to treat the Japanese, American, and Chinese characters equally. All

Americans aren't necessarily "good" or "bad," and neither are the Chinese. All my characters are scoundrels to some extent, but they live according to their values, and I had to write the story in such a way that readers could sympathize with everyone, warts and all.

In this part of the story, the spotlight is on the battle between Primavera and the Golden Dragons, so there's a distinct lack of American characters. I really regret that. Still, despite modern-day Japan and America being allies, China is the big neighbor we can't ignore. Stories about China occupy a lot of the news nowadays, so the ratio of nationalities in *Season 2* really isn't that odd, when you think about it.

This next point may seem obvious, but unlike the worlds of *Higurashi* and *Umineko*, *RGD* has no loops, magic, or afterlife. In my other works, it's a simple matter to revive a character who's died, but in *RGD*, death is absolute and irreversible, obviously.



In that sense, I was aware as early as the concept stage that out of all the worlds I've portrayed, this is the one where death has the greatest impact. That's why I prioritized the pace of the story in the first half of the season, by keeping casualties to a minimum during gun battles, the shock that comes with "death" is relatively mild. That way, the inevitable death in the latter half is all the more meaningful.

The horrors of death are hard to escape in *Season 3* and *Last Season*, but behind it all, I hope readers come away with the messages I intended to communicate.

Throughout the creation process, were there any characters who turned out differently than you expected? If so, how did they end up changing or being revised?

Some, yes (laughs). That's easy to see in the case of the first villain from *Season 1*, Alfred. I originally intended for him to be no more than a small-time arc boss, but I found his strong personality to be interesting, so I kept him around until the *Last Season* and had him grow as a meaningful part of the supporting cast.

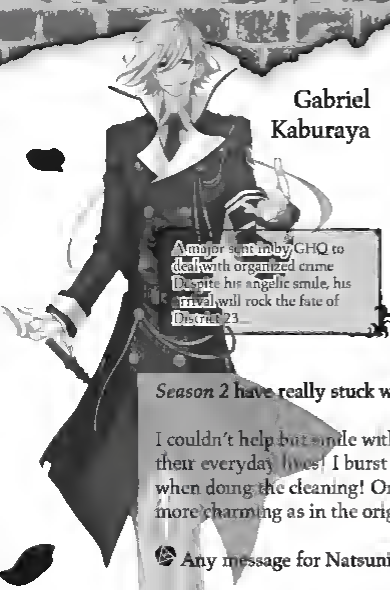
I can't reveal more at the time of this interview, but there are other characters who saw some upheaval in relation to their roles and circumstances as I was writing the story.

I actually find it really fun when characters change like that during the writing process. Conversely, when characters have that sort of "perfect" progression that fits neatly alongside the plot, I tend to get bored (laughs). Beyond just being the writer, I'm also the first reader, so I'm delighted when characters and plot elements challenge my expectations.

If forced to say, who's your favorite character? Least favorite? And why?

The truth is, I love all of *RGD*'s characters. They all stick to their beliefs and stay true to their cool selves. So even if they are rogues, something about them feels refreshing.

If forced to name my least favorite...it would have to be a certain major (laughs). In a series like *RGD*—filled with so many exhilarating characters—a guy like him comes off as kind of scary. I get the chills just writing him. That said, he'd fit right in in the worlds of *Higurashi* or *Umineko* (laughs).


A major sort-it by GHQ to deal with organized crime
Despite his angelic smile, his arrival will rock the fate of District 23

Gabriel Kaburaya

What were you hoping for from Nana Natsunishi-sensei and her manga version of *Season 2*? Did you get what you wanted?

Natsunishi-sensei has the coolest style, so I was hoping that she would take charge and make my story the best it could be! I also wanted to see the sorts of expressions and charm that can only come with a manga version. By those criteria, she earned a 100% perfect score!

What events from the manga version of *Season 2* have really stuck with you?

I couldn't help but smile with joy at the scenes of the Wandering Dogs living their everyday lives! I burst out laughing when Charles pulls out Nina's bra when doing the cleaning! On that note, I love how Nina is about three times more charming as in the original (laughs).

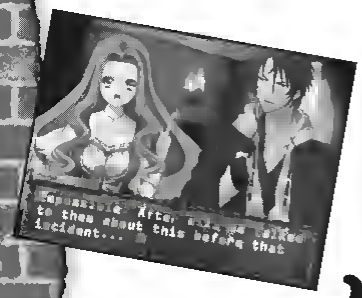
Any message for Natsunishi-sensei?

Thank you so much for taking on the manga version of this tangled web of a story! Despite being the original author, I myself was captivated by the utterly charming Wandering Dogs who are so full of life! I'm so glad I asked you to do this job, Natsunishi-sensei!! I really appreciate it! Love ya!!

Finally, any message for all the readers out there?

I just hope everyone takes their time to enjoy the story while reflecting and reading between the lines.

The story is one of the past, starting in 1947. I just have to wonder if maybe, one hundred years in the future .. Will the 2047 of our world resemble that of *RGD*. ....?



ROSE GUNS DAYS SEASON 2 ③

RYUKISHI07
NANA NATSUNISHI

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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